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BY

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PREFACE.

THE forty days betwixt the resurrection and ascension of Christ were a transition period, during which, by occasional manifestations and habitual withdrawment from their sight, He was training His apostles for a life of communion with an unseen Saviour. Amongst these manifestations there is none more touching, nor better fitted to illustrate His own assurance, "Lo, I am with you alway," than the interview beside the Sea of Tiberias, which forms the supplemental chapter of St. John. Interposed betwixt the Gospels and Acts, like a beautiful bridge, it leaves no chasm. Straight along the level, from the labours of the Master it conducts us to the ministry of His servants;

and, the cloud which received Him notwithstanding, it helps us to understand how He still is present with His people.

For publishing the following meditations, the author has no better apology than the interest which he felt in the subject, and which was to some extent shared by a friendly audience. Should any one desire to study more fully this most instructive portion of New Testament history, he is referred to "The Risen Redeemer" of Dr. Krummacher, translated by Mr. Betts with a vividness and eloquence worthy of the original.

Instead of a full Table of Contents, following Mr. Sheppard, Mr. Bagster, and other good examples, the Author has given at the end of his little book an Alphabetical Index.

November 27, 1862.

CONTENTS.

THE LAKE OF GALILEE.

"After these things Jesus manifested himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias."

From Mount Moriah a rugged path leads down to the valley. The night was clear and cool—the first week in April—and every footstep was fragrant; for the thyme and the rosemary had newly fetched up that incense which each successive spring earth yields to her Maker; and deep down in the hollow murmured a stream which told that the vernal rains were not long over and gone. From the city there rose into the sky a misty light, as from a festival; but whatever might be the stir and excitement in the streets, with white cliffs and shadowy ravines, Olivet, lonely and silent, looked down on it all.

The Passover was finished, a new ordinance had been instituted, a hymn had been sung,

and now the little company was descending this path—the temple behind them, Gethsemane before them—a sad and anxious company; Jesus, sublime in His resolute purpose and far-seeing sorrow, His attendants weak with dim apprehension and that mysterious forecast, which we all know so well, of coming calamity. Nor was it reassuring when such words broke the silence—"All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee."

You know the sequel. You know how in language the warm expression of his own attachment, although not sufficiently considerate of his brother apostles, Peter again and again protested, "Though all shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended" "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee." And you know how he kept his promise. You know how his ardour carried him a little farther than the rest; how, when the others fled, he followed as far as to the high-priest's palace;

but you know how there his courage gave way; how, at the first challenge, he exclaimed, 'I am not His disciple'; and how, at last, with oaths and execrations, he declared, "I know not the man."

A month has passed on: a month which to the world has given a risen Redeemer, which to all the apostles has given again their Master, which to Peter has brought forgiveness and reinstatement in the lovingkindness of the Lord. And now the time of Christ's ascension is near. It is a calm, sweet morning in May, and they are beside the lake of Galilee. Seven of the eleven apostles have been up all night, toiling, as it turned out, for the last time, at their old vocation of fishermen, with no success, till Jesus joined them, and in a single sweep filled their net so full that they could not draw it. The last meal that they and He had all taken together, was on that night so much to be remembered,* and since then "all things were made new." Sin had been expiated, God's

* On His fourth appearance (Luke xxiv. 42) He ate not *with* but "before" them; and Thomas was absent.

sacrifice on behalf of a sinning world had been offered, and the kingdom had come—the reign of God in the midst of men. And so there—not in the Holy City, nor under the shadow of Moriah, but far off, on the heathen border, in "Galilee of the Gentiles"—Jesus meets His destined Evangelists; and in the whole incident there is something significant, we might almost say symbolic. They are engaged in their lawful calling, when the Master accosts them; teaching us that Christ is not ashamed of His servants because their employment is homely, or because they wear the coarse garb of the fisherman. But in that calling even experienced hands, habituated to the lake and proficients in their craft, have no success till their Master directs them where to find; teaching us in all our ways to acknowledge a higher wisdom. The race is not always to the swift; and unless the Lord Himself fill the net, the scholar, the trader, the statesman may toil all night, and catch nothing.

Yes; "the morning has now come," and it is very lovely. Nor is it merely that the lake is glass; it is not merely that the blossomed

oleanders, like willowy roses, proclaim the plenitude of summer; it is not the promise of plenty in the ripening barley and leafy orchards round them; but their world is new. Their future is unknown; His precise designs and purposes their Master has not yet unfolded; but it is enough. He Himself is here, —in His countenance no sorrow now: on His spirit no sore pressure such as human friendship can neither share nor understand. And as with gunwale still wet and slippery, the boats are beached—as on the pebbly strand the embers have gone out, and their repast is finished, although a working day, it feels so Sabbath-like; for, radiant in resurrection-life, rich in that calm rest into which He has entered, no longer so careful to veil His glory, the Master is in the midst; and although little has yet been spoken, it seems as if all the holiest seasons of the last three years had come again, with a nearer heaven intermingled. It is the Lord. He lives; He dieth no more. And it is thus that He looks: so concerned for His people's welfare, so glad to provide the meal for the tired and hungry boatmen, so benignant toward their

happiness: "Come and dine." Yet the movements so miraculous: His sudden appearance, the surprising draught of fishes, the repast so strangely provided; in His graciousness such majesty, His very sweetness so awful, that none could be intrusive, nor "durst" any one break the silence, and put in words the question rising to his lips, "Who art thou?"*

But the silence ends, the reserve is so far broken. Peter already knows that he is forgiven, but with Divine considerateness the Lord Jesus is desirous of setting him right with his brother apostles, and with Divine wisdom the Head of the Church purposes to found something on his very fall. So when the meal was ended, and the time was come for free and friendly converse, the Lord addressed Himself to Peter. The very question was so shaped as to recal to Peter's mind his rash and arrogant avowal, "Although all men deny thee, yet will not I:" "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?"—implying, 'Son of Jonas, not long ago you boasted, that if these others denied me, you loved me so much more than

* See Note A.

they, that there was no fear of you. What say you now? Do you love me more than the rest?' And to the question thus put, very beautiful in its meekness is Peter's answer. He is too humble now, and too modest, to make any comparison, but he must come out with the truth, and to the Searcher of Hearts he appeals, "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee;" and, accepting the declaration, Jesus replies, "Feed my lambs." 'I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not; now thou art converted, strengthen weak brethren. Take for thy special charge those who are still weak in the faith; let love find its outlet in feeding my lambs.' *

Then a second time He said it—not because He doubted the truth of the avowal, but in order to intensify and emphasize the exhortation which that avowal elicited,—"Feed my sheep." And not without an obvious allusion to Peter's threefold denial, Christ's question was a third time repeated,† and the third time it was charged on the apostle, "Feed my sheep;" and a presenti-

* See Note B. † See Note C.

ment was given him of the martyrdom which he should incur in the service. Then it would appear as if with the words, "Follow me!"—words which at first, and three years before, had summoned him to discipleship, and which now finally called him away from the fishing-boat to more exalted functions—it would seem as if with these words the Lord Jesus had made a movement to arise and go thence, and Peter had literally followed. But there was another disciple who made the self-same movement; and turning round, and seeing John also follow, the old Peter gleamed out for a moment, as he asked, 'And what is to be his destiny? He volun eers to follow: is there also a cross for *him?*' a question which was rebuked in the reply, 'What is that to thee? Should he escape all violent hands, and live on to the close of the dispensation, what is that to thee? Follow thou me!'

In this touching incident the first thing which strikes us is the grace of the Lord Jesus. Penitent as Peter was, it was needful to set him right with his brother apostles,

whom he had first of all wronged by his forwardness, and next scandalized by his fall; and how admirably is this accomplished by the question, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?"—a question to which Peter replied so humbly, as to show that he claimed no pre-eminence even in affection,—but so earnestly, that fellow-servants could not refuse the avowal which sufficed for the Master.

So, in correcting any fault, in pointing it out, in trying to cure it—nay, in forgiving it, and trying to set the offender right with his fellows, there is need for holy skill and tenderness. Whatsoever other causes may have contributed, there can be little doubt that fierce denunciations have often aggravated slight doctrinal errors into chronic and deliberate heresies; just as a harsh, unsympathetic treatment has first discouraged the returning backslider, and at last driven him off into a sullen dislike of what he deems a high-pitched and unfeeling hypocrisy. But if we cannot hope to emulate the discrimination which through Peter's rashness still recognised his love, and when we read the

message of the newly-risen Saviour, "Go and tell my brethren, AND Peter," as well as the interview before us, if its Divine dexterity, its superhuman delicacy fills us with despair, we may at least copy the tender touch and holy handling which did not break the bruised reed, but so bound up and strengthened Peter's crushed affection that it was stronger than before—no bruised reed, but a very trump of God, when a fortnight afterwards the Holy Spirit blew through him that Pentecostal blast, and they that were in their graves heard the voice—three thousand dead in trespasses looked up and saw the Christ of God, and began to live for ever.

A second lesson is the Saviour's wisdom in the selection of His agency. In that same apostolic band there was another to whom we might have expected that the Lord would have said, rather than to Peter, "Feed my lambs: feed my sheep." For depth of insight, for exalted spirituality, for that swift and sympathetic intuition which is the prerogative of love and like-mindedness, for symmetry of character, who can compare to Zebedee's younger son? Nay,

"He was like the moon,
Because the beams that brightened him passed over
Our dark heads, and we knew them not for light
Till they came back from his." *

Was he not the most Christ-like in the company?—and are there not many traits of the Master, which we seem to know best by their reflection from this beloved disciple? Yet although he is the disciple whom the brethren love, and although he was the disciple whom Jesus loved, in the work of planting the Church and first preaching the Gospel he was not put forward like that other who made so many false steps, and who had been repeatedly rebuked for his rashness.

For this there was a reason, not only in Peter's experience, but in the very make of Peter's mind. In all ages you will find, that although deep thinkers may sway the thoughtful spirits round them, yet, in order to be popular, men must be frank, open, fervid, and must abound, not so much in the finer feelings, as in those which are shared by the most of their fellows. Thus, last century it was not the devout and gentle Doddridge,

* Adapted from "Balder."

but the impetuous Whitfield, who shook England from end to end. Thus it has not been Leighton, or Binning, or any such sequestered saint or seraphic thinker, who has made his mark on Scotland, so much as a real flesh-and-blood reformer—a participator in the caustic national humour, scornful of superstition, sardonic toward all mere sentiment, reverential only to the Word of God. And thus, in the fatherland, it was not Melancthon, with his fine taste, his correct logic, his clear and careful statements, his beautiful and balanced piety, but it was Luther, with his startling paradox and sublime excess—Luther, with that mighty heart of his, which is still the most living thing in Germany—Luther, with those burning words which, picked up and heated anew by men who, like Goethe, have little heart or faith themselves, still make such excellent thunderbolts—it was Luther, whose noisy impetuosity roused all Europe, and brought down in dusty ruin a third part of the mystic Babylon. And so the men of taste, the lovers of the correct and the beautiful, must often stand aside and allow God's work to go on through agencies

which, if they do not altogether like, it is evident that He Himself has chosen, and which are plainly the best adapted to the world as it is.

Still, let it not be forgotten that for the other class the great Head of the Church has a place and a function. John did not preach sermons at the close of which thousands were pricked to the heart, and exclaimed, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" but neither did Peter write—even under Divine guidance it would not have been congruous to him to have written—such a Gospel as John's, or such a treatise as John's First Epistle—an Epistle and Gospel through whose refracting atmosphere the Sun of Righteousness is kept from ever setting on our world—into which we cannot look, but the very Godhead looks at us, Immanuel in His own light thence shining, because first received into the pellucid, waveless mirror of the narrator's loving mind.

If we were more devoted to the Master we should have less dislike to any fit and faithful servant. After all, the thing that *tells* is truth

in love,—God's own truth spoken by one who loves *it* and who loves *Him*, and who loves the souls of men—contagious truth, truth that has taken hold of what is characteristic in our mental constitution, and conformed it to its own likeness. In one of the Polar voyages, they made a lens of ice. They took the clear, crystal cake, and polished convex either side, and then, when held in the sunbeams, without melting itself, it would ignite the taper or set the fagot on fire. But for such frozen mediums there is no place in Christ's service. Before giving any one commission to teach or to preach, He asks, 'Lovest thou me? Candidate for the ministry, conductor of the Sabbath class, lovest thou me?' It is an awful thing to be only the artist—the mere lens of ice, transmitting what you yourself do not feel. In order to be the evangelist you must be the burning and shining light; and if, according to the gift given, there is love—it may be a taper in the chamber, or a beacon on the mountain top—a smoking furnace, or a pure and perfect flame—but it will be in keeping with the natural character, and it will be by

Christ enkindled; zeal as well as knowledge, benevolence as well as truth, a *burning* and a *shining* light.

When their Master's need was at the sorest, none of the disciples acted out and out the part of the noblest and most self-devoting friendship; but there were two whose fall is most conspicuous—the one having betrayed Him, the other having with oaths and execrations repudiated all connexion with Him. Both fell, but the one fell to rise no more; the other was not only recovered, but fully reinstated in the confidence of his brethren and in the favour of his Lord. What made the difference? It all arose from this:—There never was a time when Judas really loved his Master. To the appeal, 'Judas Iscariot, lovest thou me?' he never could have answered, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." Ah, no! he loved the money, he loved the present world, he loved the praise of men; but he never truly loved his Master. Peter did. Truly and tenderly, and with all the vehemence of his honest and ardent nature, he stood by his

Lord; and although, in a fatal hour, his faith faltered, and, in the storm of temptation, his love went down and disappeared, it still was there, and soon came up again in an outburst of shame and repentance. And so, the mere professor of religion may fall and never be recovered. The name to live was all he had, and, now that this is lost, there is nothing to raise him up, or bring him back again. But you who are vexed with yourself because of your discomfitures and downbreaks—you who say, 'I had better give up, for I am not getting on. Every new start is sure to be followed by another stumble. And it is not only new temptations, but the old sins over again. I despair of pardon. I despair of ever growing better'—think of Peter. Think of all those who, like Peter, have not only been forgiven seven times, but seventy times seven. And if, to the demand of the heart-searching Immanuel, "Lovest thou me?" you can answer, "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee," His long-suffering mercy will not only pardon but cure you; and, called to a fresh career of discipleship, and a new trial

of faith and affection by that word, "Follow me," your diseases will be healed, your soul will be restored in the paths of righteousness, and you will be upheld by the Lord whom you follow.

THE NIGHT WHEN THEY CAUGHT NOTHING.

"That night they caught nothing."

CHRIST'S attendants were hard-working people Some of them, like the sons of Zebedee, might own a little property; and Matthew, as a farmer of revenue, had once the chance of growing rich. But it does not appear that any of them had ever been men of wealth, or in what we should call independent circumstances; and, at the time of this incident, it is likely enough that the dishonesty of their late purse-bearer had swept away their ready money, and reduced them to an unwonted poverty. At all events, when, in obedience to their risen Master's bidding, they had gone before Him into Galilee, the first time that He came up with them He found seven of them on the water fishing. It was morning,

and they had been out all night, but they had been utterly unsuccessful. And what does that mean? You angle for amusement, and after a long day, when your friends meet you returning, and ask, "What sport?" you exhibit your empty basket, and can bear to be bantered for your lucklessness or want of skill. But the poor boatman says, "I go a-fishing," because there is no food in the house, or because there is an account to pay, and no money to meet it; and when the morning dawns on his empty deck, it is hard to go home weary, and sleepy, and hungry, and know that his own vexation on the deep must be repeated in the disappointment of those who tarry on the land. "We have toiled all night and caught nothing." There is nothing for Simon's wife to make ready,—nothing for Simon himself to carry to the market at Capernaum, and convert into pence and shekels; and, after this wakeful night, it cannot be a working day. We hardly realize the case, but the Lord Jesus understood it well. For years He had mingled with these men, and was thoroughly acquainted with their privations and their hardships, and had

shared their narrow lodging and their homely fare; and as He now espied the empty vessel making for the shore, He knew that in yonder light boat were heavy hearts, and He prepared for them a wonderful surprise. "Children, have ye anything to eat?" was His inquiry, as He hailed them from the shore. "No," was the reply—the curt monosyllable of weary and disappointed men; but "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find," was the answer of One whose kindness is not easily repulsed, and whose precept usually involves a promise: "Cast the net, and this time ye shall find;" and when the sweep was finished, and the seine was drawn to shore, they found that they had made a little fortune. A meal was ready for them on the strand; a hundred and fifty-three *

* The fathers and mediæval writers find in the number of these fishes various mysteries. For example, Theophylact suggests that the Gentiles may stand for a hundred, and the Jews for fifty, whilst the doctrine of the Trinity is obviously indicated by the three. *Τους ἐξ ἐθνων ἑκατόν εἴποις ἀν, ἀλλά καὶ οἱ ἐξ Ισραὴλ οἵ πεντήκοντα νοηθειεν· οἱ δὲ τρεις τὴν εἰς τὴν ἁγίαν τριάδα πίστιν δηλοῦσιν.* But Augustine

"great fishes" tumbled and struggled in the straitening net: and to crown their joy and turn their mourning into dancing, there was no need to ask their benefactor and their host, "Who art thou?" for now that they were beside Him, their eyes confirmed what the wonder hinted:—"It was the Lord,"—it was their Master come again.

And what may be assumed to be the meaning of the miracle? When we think of the timing of it—as one of the final flashes, one of the last forth-lettings of His grace and power before He disappeared from mortal sight—does it not tell us that wherever disciples toil their Lord looks on? Does it not tell us that

is much more ingenious. There are ten precepts in the decalogue, and there are seven operations of the Holy Spirit; these added together are seventeen. But the series, 1+2+3+4, up to 17, is exactly 153:—"Sic adde, et invenis numerum sacrum fidelium atque sanctorum in cœlestibus cum Domino futurorum." (Sermo ccxlviii. 4, and the same idea is elaborated in several other sermons of the same group.) No wonder that with tart disdain the clear mind of Calvin dismisses all such speculations as child's play: "Si quis propius expendat, reperiet puerilem esse lusum."

in their common calling, however humble, His servants are the objects of a Saviour's sympathy, and that when they have laboured hard and long without success, He is not indifferent to their disappointment? And when one effort has failed after another—when they have toiled all night and caught nothing, does it not tell them that they have a Friend who can direct them on what side of the ship to cast the net, so that after many balks and failures, the last throw shall inclose a multitude of fishes?

1. The lot of Christ's disciples is usually a life of toil. In this there is little difference betwixt the Christian and the worldling; if anything, the difference is in the worldling's favour. The Christian is constrained to keep the king's highway—the beaten path of industry and straightforward honesty, and cannot shorten the journey by leaping fences, or trying an occasional near-cut through his neighbour's property. His conscience is a hard task-master, and insists that every penny shall be fairly earned. And the consequence is, that almost all the disciples of the Saviour now on earth are carrying the yoke, and are

toil, toil, toiling. By far the greater number are working with their hands. In fields and factories, in workshops and kitchens, in mines and fishing-boats, bending over the forge, feeding the blast-furnace, you find them: rising early, plying their monotonous task, the big drops often trickling down their brow, and youthful energy fast evaporating into a meagre and infirm old age. And others you will find whose task is partly manual or mechanic, partly or chiefly mental. One teaches the young—hires out his head and heart to enkindle intelligence, or transfuse his own refinement into minds which are often, alas! incapable, for employers who are often, alas! unthankful. Another grapples with disease. Through the bleak December night, with bleared eyes from broken slumber, he goes to throw away his own health in warding off the stroke of death, or mitigating the paroxysms of some excruciating malady. A third fights his country's battles. Away from wife and children, he marches through the putrid swamp, lodges on the frozen or the flooded field, associates with comrades rough, reckless, and uncongenial, and, his life in his hand,

mounts the breach volcanic with destruction and quivering with gory swaths mown down in mortal agony. A fourth is a trader. A solitary adventurer, or a son of Zebedee in partnership with others, his property is afloat, and what with his dependence on others, what with the dangers of the deep and the tempests overhead, what with the fluctuations of the atmosphere, and the fickleness of the cunning prey he longs to capture, perhaps for a continuance his is as toilsome a lot as any, and in the storms which from time to time arise, it is often absolute agony. An omnipotent Master might have made it otherwise. Even on earth He could have emancipated His servants from this drudgery. He might have made His Church a pleasure-garden or a place of elegant and uninvaded repose. But His wisdom—or, what is the same thing, His kindness—has judged that it is not good for man to be idle. And not only is it best to be busy, but a great deal of labour must be irksome. There is much of it that won't set to music, much of it that won't make a picture, much of it that won't tie up in bouquets and posies. There is much of it

that, do what you will, is positively disagreeable—not pastime at all, but downright discipline, going quite against the grain, needing self-denial. The boatman may have his moon-lit voyage, and his merry song occasionally; but to toil all night is hard—to wake when others sleep is not so pleasant; nor is there much pleasure in scaly planks, and slippery ropes, and wet tarpaulings, and an extinguished fire, and leaking timbers, and an unbroken fast, when the morning dawns on empty nets, with comrades cross at their unsuccessful fishery.

2. For, secondly, the toil of the disciple is not always successful. Conceding what we ourselves have often urged—conceding that Christianity is itself an element of success—that by the clearness which simplicity lends to the eye, and the soundness which temperance imparts to the system, that by the elasticity which the good hope infuses into the spirits, and the entanglements from which principle preserves the conscience and the character; conceding that Christianity goes far to promote the lawful ends of the labourer, mental or manual, Christianity is far from

guaranteeing against all possible failure or defeat. If for probationary purposes Infinite Wisdom has refused to make the Church on earth a play-ground or pleasure-garden, for the same reason He has refused to make it the infallible avenue to worldly wealth, the sure and certain passport to earthly rank or renown. A ship manned by good Christians, a concern in which none are embarked but disciples, may toil all night and catch nothing. A God-fearing operative may meet with some accident which disables him for life, and which throws him on the kindness of others. A pious servant may lay up a good foundation for old age, and in the sinking of some bank or joint-stock company her frugal savings may be suddenly swallowed up. A Christian hero may have saved an empire, or with the latch of his living arm behind the door may have bolted out the foe, and in the moment when a grateful nation is ready to crown the conqueror, a stray missile may strike the laurel from his brow, and may intercept the hosannah ere it reach his ear. A conscientious trader may have foregone many a self-indulgence, may have cut off the right arm of some ruling

passion, or plucked out the right eye of some favourite taste or propensity, in order to owe no man anything, and yet provide things honest in the sight of all men ; he may have curtailed his rest, abridged his holiday, and worked his mind till the brain was fire, and every nerve flashed lightning ; and when the night was far spent he did inclose a glorious spoil, and felt that he should now be rewarded for his patience and his pains. How the floats dance and quiver with the living load ! How all the surface swirls and jabbles with the eddying shoal ! How, like subaqueous ingots, they flash their sides of gold and silver ! and now that mesh over mesh and coil over coil the hempen snare is coming up, oh ! what a haul ! what a provision for the loved ones ! what a happiness at home ! But something has snapped. Is it possible ? Oh mercy, mercy ! the net is broken ! To think of it—such a take, and so near the land, and all again scattered in the depths of the sea !

3. Now, of this calamity, the Great Eye is witness, and with this bitter grief the Great Heart sympathizes. It is not willingly or wilfully that He sends such an affliction ;

and, as this incident teaches, if we take the Master's bidding, we shall yet be gainers by this loss—for this delay or disappointment we shall at last be all the richer.

Perhaps it may be made up in some eventual temporal gain. Like the disciples who were rewarded for a night of abortive effort by a marvellous draught at the unlikeliest time, the morning; so, if undisheartened by disappointments you abide in your calling, the Master may at last point out in His providence the side of the ship on which, if you cast the net, you shall inclose a great multitude of fishes. The success is the most precious and permanent which is won after many reverses—the crown which a Bruce obtains after he has been twelve times defeated—the Eddystone pillar which is reared cautiously, skilfully, solidly, after one and another have been swept away, and which holds aloft for a hundred years its towering torch through tempests such as its flimsy predecessors never witnessed. Do not lose heart. There is no special or absolute promise; but there is a great general principle, and an extensive actual experience. On the side of industry,

integrity, and perseverance, there are not only the wishes and the prayers of all good men, but there is the course of God's own providence; and if, with hopefulness and energy, you do not succeed at last, it is only because the problem takes too long for man's short life and feeble strength to reach in every case the solution.

But, in any case, the Lord will provide. Had even that throw of the net brought nothing from the lake, the Master had a meal prepared already on the land. So take His bidding. Ply your calling, and if that calling fails to yield you food and raiment, you may fearlessly cast yourself on that all-embracing care and kindness by which the ravens are fed and the lilies are clothed.

"Set thou thy trust upon the Lord,
And be thou doing good;
And so thou in the land shalt dwell,
And verily have food."

In real truth, however, it can never be said of a disciple, in the discharge of his duty, that he toils all night and takes nothing. He may not catch precisely that for which, in

the first instance, he sweeps or dredges, but the net never comes up empty. If it does not popple and welter with fishes, it is full of good lessons and instructive experiences; and no disciple will say that the night was a bad one when Christ comes in the morning. "Oh gainful loss! oh wondrous grace!" as good Mr. Williams of Kidderminster wrote in his diary, after heavy losses in trade, "Oh how wise and gracious is my heavenly Father! How sweetly doth He overrule afflictive providences to my great advantage and comfort. Surely, I find my heart improving and growing hereby in submission to the will of God, delight in God and in duty. For long I have been trying to say, 'Thou art my portion, O Lord.' At last, finding that nothing less would satisfy the desires of my soul, and believing that the Lord himself had stirred up these desires, and therefore, if I were willing, He could not be unwilling, I ventured, though with a trembling heart, to say, 'Thou art my portion, O Lord.' Thereupon joy like a tide came rolling in, and got possession of my soul; and I was quickly able, in the confidence of faith, to repeat the

aspiration. My mind is full of it, and it puts life and vigour into every grace."

Should there be present any one suffering from worldly reverses, we venture to say, that there is nothing like confronting the full reality. There are many worse ills than poverty, and not many greater evils than an unblessed prosperity. Let us not be the victims of a senseless fashion, or of our own foolish anxiety to keep up appearances; but, meekly bowing to a stronger and a wiser will, we shall soon learn how to be abased, as well as how to abound. And, what is not a little remarkable, if in the man there is anything really good or great, he will come out grander—he will show more sublimely in the valley of humiliation than on the pinnacle of mere earthly promotion. His heart is likely to be more tender, his walk with God closer, his conscience more scrupulous, his sympathies more lively, his discharge of duty more thorough. Nay, paradoxical as it may seem, with lessened means he may actually do greater good, and with a store sadly diminished, he may have actually less of carefulness or fear for the

future. And, like one who has lived all his life in a garden, but who is amazed to find what beautiful flowers bespangle the open heath or the thoroughfare, latent endearments and neglected sources of enjoyment may acquire such new beauty and sweetness, that he shall marvel that he prized them so little before, and paid so dear for very paltry substitutes. Above all, religion may grow more genuine, prayer more earnest, the soul's interests more urgent, the Saviour more precious; and, although the toil may be severe, and the fare may be homely—though, after hard labour in the open air and on the hungry lake, you come home, to find nothing but "a fire of coals and fish laid thereon, and bread"—when you think who provided the repast, and who presides at the board, it will taste like angels' food. The words of Jesus, "Come and dine," will make it a miraculous feast, and you will not grudge the hours of toil which end as you wish the toilsome night of life itself to end—in the society of the Saviour, and where, instead of the question often so trying, so tantalizing, "Children, have you any meat?" you shall

find yourself sitting down at the table which He himself has prepared.

More especially does this miracle carry a message to the "fishers of men."

"Full many a dreary anxious hour,
We watch our nets alone,
In drenching spray, and driving shower,
And hear the night-bird's moan.

"At morn we look, and nought is there;
Sad dawn of cheerless day!
Who then from pining and despair,
The sickening heart can stay?" *

But be not discouraged, thou faithful preacher—thou patient, persevering missionary. The coyest fish may be caught at last,†

* Keble.

† "An old man in Watton, whom Mr. Thornton had in vain urged to come to church, was taken ill and confined to his bed. Mr. Thornton went to the cottage, and asked to see him. The old man, hearing his voice below, answered, in no very courteous tone, "I don't want *you* here; you may go away." The following day the curate was again at the foot of the stairs. "Well, my friend, may I come up to-day and sit beside you?" Again he received the same reply—"I don't want *you* here." Twenty-one days succes-

and the net which has been let down a hundred times in vain may at last surround a multitude. Even at this moment, when you are ready to abandon the work in despair, He who has all the time been a witness of your toil may be sending to the right side of the ship a shoal unseen by you, but on whom He keeps His eye,—a people at last made "willing in His day of power,"—and at whose accession your mouth will be filled with laughter and your tongue with melody.

sively Mr. T. paid his visit to the cottage, and on the twenty-second his perseverance was rewarded. He was permitted to enter the room of the aged sufferer, to read the Bible, and pray by his bedside. The poor man recovered, and became one of the most regular attendants at the house of God."—*Rev. W. R. Fremantle's Memoirs of Rev. Spencer Thornton. Second edition, p.* 84.

JOY COMES IN THE MORNING.

"Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord."

Throughout His public ministry the Lord Jesus was constantly surrounded by His apostles. For nearly three years they were the companions of every journey, and, attending Him day by day, had it been needful, they could have told how every hour was filled up, and could have recorded night after night every place of His sojourn. But after His resurrection He had no personal attendants. He preached no sermons, He fed no multitude, He healed no diseases, He went to no festival, He visited no house of mourning; but where or how the forty days and forty nights anterior to His ascension were spent, no one could tell, nor does it seem as if any one had tried to conjecture.

Ten or eleven times during that interval He was seen by His former friends; and of these various appearances a primary object was to give infallible proof that He had burst the bonds of death, and returned from the grave's dominion. These successive appearances did not cease till the anxiety as well as the incredulity of affection was abundantly satisfied; till the sceptical Thomas could cavil no longer; till every former associate was prepared to spend his years and lay down his life in proclaiming the all-important fact, "The Lord is risen."

In these interviews another object was to give final instructions to the propagators of the Gospel and the planters of the Christian Church. Many of the things which formerly they could not bear He told them now; nor was it until He "had given commandments unto the apostles whom He had chosen" that He "was taken up."

But in these successive appearances there was a farther purpose, and you will find it very instructive if you look somewhat carefully at the mode and circumstances in which they took place.

Not only was Christ risen—to all practical effects He was already "taken up." No one knew the place of His abode. To search for Him was vain. In neither temple nor synagogue was He any longer to be found; Bethany could give no account of Him; in that garden, of which it is said, "He ofttimes resorted thither," He was never seen again. Yet, though unseen, He was not absent. He had only gone out of sight; He had not gone away;* and it is interesting to observe how, from time to time, He made His presence palpable. It was the third day after His decease, and in Joseph's garden a lowly follower, near the empty sepulchre, is weeping in bewilderment of sorrow. Aware of some one near her, but, in a world where there was only One she wanted, scarcely caring to see any other, she answered His question, and He might have gone away again, and the tear-filled eyes and absent thoughts would never have surmised the Saviour. She would just have still supposed that the man who addressed her was the gardener, had He not

* See "Lessons from the Great Biography," pp. 309—312.

spoken again in that very voice which once on a time had made herself a new creature, and the like of which was not to be heard in earth or heaven. That afternoon two friends are travelling out into the country. A stranger joins them. Wonderfully intelligent, with a flood of unprecedented illumination making the Bible brilliant, chasing the sadness from their spirits, and making their bosoms burn with such mysterious fervor that they are no longer stumbled at their Master's sufferings, and in the death of Jesus begin to see the dawn of Messiah's glory; they still have no suspicion of the speaker, till from their "holden eyes" He sweeps the veil, and in that moment vanishes. The apostles are assembled. They are listening to the tale of Cleopas and his breathless comrade. They know not what to make of it. Such "strange things" are happening. Jesus is not in the sepulchre, and it almost looks as if God were not in the world—when they are startled by the apparition of Jesus in that very room. As He says "Peace be unto you," the look and tones are His, but, in their terror, they can think of nothing save a spirit. However,

as He shows His hands and feet, and sits down to the simple meal, and continues His discourse, panic yields to joy, and in the sober certainty reverence and rapture grow together. His words have come true; the sepulchre is empty; their Master is again in their midst, by this time their Lord and their God; and in preaching repentance and remission of sins they have now their great errand to the world.

But of all the instances in which the risen Saviour revealed Himself, no one is more instructive than this manifestation at the Lake of Galilee.

Two years and a half ago, this very party had spent a similar night. They had toiled till dawn, and taken nothing. Their boats had been already beached, when, with a crowd of people pressing round Him, Jesus came down to the shore, and, stepping into Simon's boat, begged that he would thrust out a little from the land. In this floating pulpit having finished His address, He bade Simon lower the net. Listlessly and languidly the weary fisher let it down, when, instead of coming home empty as before, it tumultuated

with burnished perch or ponderous carp, a wallowing load, to whose frantic efforts at escape the net was yielding, when the other boat pushed off, and secured the precious spoil.*

That morning was memorable; for whilst it was momentary wealth to the boatmen and their families, it was also an epoch in their personal history. It was then that they left all, and became stated attendants on Jesus. And, likely enough, this other unsuccessful night brought to their remembrance the former, with its wonderful sequel. At all events, we may be sure that through the dreary hours their thoughts often reverted to the Master. On this very lake, what wonders they had seen! On that coast the demoniac dispossessed, the famished congregation fed; on this watery expanse the tempest stilled, or His wonderful steps pacing over the billows. And here He may yet be found again; for had He not said, "After I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee"?†

Daylight comes, and fond imaginations fly. This is Galilee; but there is yet no Jesus.

* Luke v. 1—11. See Note D. † Matt. xxvi. 32.

No one has come to them walking on the water, and now that it is morning, their boats are empty enough; but there is no excited throng coming down towards the shore, crowding and crushing and eager for more of those gracious words to which they have already been listening, and preceded by the wonderful Teacher. On that strand there is merely to be seen a solitary figure, nowise noticeable—perhaps an intending customer, come down to purchase for his morning meal; and to his question, "Any food?" they can only answer, "No." But He bids them cast the net on the right side of the ship, and now it heaves and undulates with such a heavy shoal, that it would be destruction to the meshes to lift it from the water. That other memorable morning, and that other miraculous draught, are so instantly suggested, that John says to Peter, "It is the Lord," and leaving it to others to look after the fishes, Peter plunges overboard, and is straightway with his Master.

A weary night; but Christ came in the morning. So at first we are apt to say; but it would be putting it more correctly if

we said that Christ, who had been present all the night allowed Himself to be seen in the morning. He was now risen from the dead, and had put on that glorious body which evades our grosser sense, and needs an act of will to make it visible.* In His ubiquitous Godhead everywhere present, at any moment or in any place He could emerge to view and reappear in corporeal guise, so that former intimacy was able to exclaim, "It is the Lord," and so that He Himself was able to say, "Reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side"; and as soon as the purpose was fulfilled, without necessarily quitting the spot, the glorified body ceased to be seen. In its escape from the sepulchre more entirely transfigured than it had been on the Holy Mount, it was only when the Lord Jesus so willed, that in flesh and blood, as of old, that body stood revealed; and when the design was accomplished, it again retired into the supersensual sphere of its habitual invisibleness.

It was "on this wise that Jesus showed

* "After His resurrection, Christ's body was only visible by a distinct act of His will."—*Chrysostom, quoted by Trench.*

Himself" when at any period after His resurrection He was seen at all. It was not by entering an apartment or by arriving from a journey, but by coming forth from the impalpable and viewless, that, whether to longing disciples or to the startled persecutor, He stood disclosed; no phantom, no mere vision, courting severest scrutiny: "Handle me and see"—and into that materialism re-embodied by His own Divine volition, the normal state of His glorified humanity was such as mortal sense cannot grasp; and just as when the body was "earthy," the thing supernatural was for His "face to shine as the sun,"* so now that it was "heavenly," the thing supernatural was for that body to come out appreciable by untransfigured organs—perceptible to eyes and ears which were not yet immortal like itself.

Such being the character of those manifestations of the unseen Saviour recorded here and elsewhere, it is easy to see the indirect or secondary object accomplished by them. They not only proved the reality of His resurrection, but they prepared the disciples,

* Matt. xvii. 2. 1 Cor. xv. 40—54.

gradually and efficiently, for that new kind of life which they were to be henceforward leading—a life associated with the Saviour's more sacredly than ever, but a life of entirely new conditions—a life in which He was to become to them at once more brotherly and more Divine, but in which memory and faith must supply the place of oral intercourse and open vision,—a life in which they who had known Christ after the flesh were thus to know Him no more,—but a life in which those who held fast His own promise, "Lo, I am with you," need perform no pilgrimage except in His company, and pass on to no region, however new or unknown, without expecting His presence.

So, after His resurrection, instead of returning to the stated society of the apostles, as before, and then at the end of forty days abruptly ascending from their midst—nay, instead of rising from the dead and taking farewell of earth on the self-same day, the Lord Jesus was content to let six weeks intervene, during which by successive appearances He was reminding disciples that, although out of their sight, He was still in their midst; and so by

the easy stepping-stones of these successive appearances, He joined Calvary to Olivet. By gentle progressive lessons He prepared the daily associates of the last three years for living still more intimately in His unseen presence.

Thus, too, although it looks like a detached appendix to the Gospel—although coming after the apparent *finis* of the verse foregoing, it starts afresh, and almost seems to say that, when he had dropped the pen, the disciple whom Jesus loved had been directed to resume, and transmit to all time this touching incident —you see what a charming epilogue to the evangelic history this chapter makes, and what an appropriate prelude to the apostolic annals. It is not only the isthmus which joins the labours of the first missionaries to the life of Jesus, but from its high eminence as we gaze on what we fancy a final flush of the Sun of Righteousness, just as we think Him in rich and tender beauty about to disappear, lo! His course again bends upward, and we find that to the happy dwellers in this region He is a Sun that sets no more.

A Saviour habitually recollected and realized was the distinctive of apostolic piety. Not to the eye-witnesses alone, but to all who believed their testimony, and to whom the Holy Spirit revealed the things of Jesus, Christ was ever presen ;—the spectator of their conduct, the guardian of their path, the president of their home, the light of the dungeon, the solace of earth, the attraction to heaven. And we cannot read their writings or the record of their lives without feeling that of their Christianity the key-note was struck on occasions like this—perhaps this very morning; and whether feeding the sheep or following the Master—whether toiling for a maintenance or "catching men," we cannot but admire the simplicity and grandeur, the seriousness and happiness, in their deportment so blended, as of those who had never quite forgotten the sweet surprise at the Lake of Galilee, and to whom it might any moment again be whispered, "It is the Lord."

And whilst a true life and a thorough—oh, how delightful, through the Remembrancer's teaching, to have the great fact of Christ's

presence so impressed as to fear no evil, and tamper with no sin!—motives purified, and the whole person filled with light in the pervasion of the flame-bright Eye—unity given to existence, and a centre to the soul, by the "For me to live is Christ," which responds to His own, "Follow me;"—the emancipated life of one inheriting the earth and redeemed from all evil,—the circumspect life of one whose terror is sin, and whose Master is served in the beauty of holiness,—the intent and hopeful life of one who has a calling so high, and a Forerunner so glorious.

Over Mr. Simeon's fireplace hung Henry Martyn's picture. Looking at it, he used to say, "There, see that blessed man! What an expression of countenance! No one looks at me as he does. He never takes his eyes off, and seems always to be saying, 'Be serious. Be in earnest. Don't trifle.'" Then smiling at the picture, and gently bowing, he would add, "And I won't—I won't trifle." But if the remembrance of a fervent spirit, or the image of an earnest friend, is thus fitted to arouse us, how solemnizing, how comforting, how inspiring should be the

thought of that omniscient and heart-searching Spectator who sees His servants beneath the cloud of night, as well as in the cold and hungry dawn; who alike descries the feeling in an apostle's mind, and the finny flock as it wanders deep beneath the wave; and who with equal precision, asking a question or giving a command, "Cast the net on the right side:" "Lovest thou me?" brings to land the watery spoil—brings to light the good confession. No one looks at you as He does, and 'Be in earnest, follow me,' is what He is always saying.

If any one is burdened with a sense of sin, he need carry that load no longer. All power in heaven and earth is given to the world's Redeemer, and the salvation He purchased He lives to bestow. In quest of forgiveness there is no distant spot to which you need travel, no distant day for which you need tarry. That pardon you may have at once, and you may have it here. A Saviour ever-present waits to be gracious, and it only needs that you realize your own wretchedness, and withal His grace and power, in order to taste the blessedness of the man to whom it

is authoritatively spoken, "Go in peace: thy sins be forgiven thee."

Is there anything you want?—anything which you do not possess, anything which you yourself are unable to perform? Christ has it, Christ can do it for you. It is a pity to toil with such dejected looks and drowsy eyes; for close at hand is One who can in a moment fill the net, and who, even if the net were continuing empty, can still feed the fisherman. As soon as the disciples were come to land, they saw that it was not for His own sake but theirs that Jesus had asked, "Have ye any meat?" for "they found a fire of coals, and fish laid thereon, and bread;" and although He allowed them to make their own addition to the banquet—"Bring of the fish which ye have now caught"—they saw that, even if they had continued to catch nothing, their Master would not have suffered them to starve. Let us learn to trust in Him who can prepare a table in the wilderness, and who, when His people have been forced to acknowledge, "We have nothing of our own," loves to surprise them with the invitation, "Come and dine."

However, still better than the meal, is the company, and the converse which follows. In His Word Christ speaks to all His disciples, and in prayer He invites us all to speak to Him; and hallowed for ever will be the scene, pebbly strand or fragrant hill, lonely chamber or crowded church, where it may be given you to enjoy communion high and sweet with the Son of God and the Saviour of your soul. This is a fellowship which no believer need forego; for, in virtue of His Godhead, the Lord Jesus, if of beings the most majestic, is withal the most condescending, and no one finds it easier to give undivided heed to a solitary suppliant than that only Potentate, whose undistracted mind administers immensity, and whose boundless essence fills the praises of eternity.

And, in looking out for the Lord Jesus, do not look too high. To the apostles it had been said by Himself and the angel at the sepulchre, "He goeth before you into Galilee." They were now in Galilee, and had seen nothing of Him yet; and if this was the time when He was about to restore the kingdom to Israel, they might naturally expect that it

would be surrounded with a splendid escort, and with a crown upon His head that they next should see Him. Well as they knew Him, and much as they loved Him, they little guessed that the inconspicuous stranger in the pale morning light was He. And so, to this hour, it is strange how the unseen Jesus disguises Himself, and (so to speak) how He is distributed.

"A poor wayfaring man of grief
Hath often crossed me on my way,
Who sued so humbly for relief,
That I could never answer, 'Nay.'
I had not power to ask his name,
Whither he went, or whence he came;
Yet was there something in his eye
That won my love, I knew not why.

"Once, when my scanty meal was spread,
He entered;—not a word he spake;—
Just perishing for want of bread,
I gave him all: he blessed it, brake,
And ate,—but gave me part again.
Mine was an angel's portion then;
For while I fed with eager haste,
That crust was manna to my taste.

"'Twas night; the floods were out; it blew
A winter hurricane aloof;

I heard his voice abroad, and flew
To bid him welcome to my roof;
I warmed, I clothed, I cheered my guest,
Laid him on my own couch to rest;
Then made the hearth my bed, and seemed
In Eden's garden while I dreamed.

"In prison I saw him next, condemned
To meet a traitor's doom at morn;
The tide of lying tongues I stemmed,
And honoured him 'midst shame and scorn.
My friendship's utmost zeal to try,
He asked if I for him would die.
The flesh was weak, my blood ran chill,
But the free spirit cried, 'I will!'

"Then, in a moment, to my view
The stranger darted from disguise;
The tokens in his hands I knew—
MY SAVIOUR stood before mine eyes.
He spake, and my poor name He named;
'Of me thou hast not been ashamed;
These deeds shall thy memorial be;
Fear not—thou didst them unto me!'"*

Strangely disguised and strangely distributed: in the South Sea Islander and the ragged scholar, in the bed-rid invalid and the starving household, in the burdensome task

* James Montgomery. See Note E.

that tries your patience, in the ungrateful pupil who makes poor requital to your pains. Still, under every mask by which faith is tested, and on which love's labour can be lavished, "it is the Lord." His is a service in which there are no failures; His a gratitude by which nothing is forgotten. "Fear not; thou didst it unto me."

LOVEST THOU ME?

"He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?"

A Saviour, a Friend, a Master, a God—such is the great requirement of the human spirit, and it is the provision for this requirement which makes the Gospel so welcome, so glorious.

You want a Saviour. You are a sinner. You have broken God's law, and, in thought, word, and deed, you are offending every day. Of this, perhaps, you are poignantly aware. If life should be the perpetual effort to please God, your life has been a continual shortcoming; if self-indulgence is sin, your life has been a long transgression; and, speaking of your depravity, you have no name dark enough to describe it. You adopt the strong words of the Psalmist, "Mine iniquities have

gone over mine head: as a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me." "There is no soundness in my flesh, nor any rest in my bones, because of my sin." "I have been as a beast before thee."

Or, possibly, you are sorry that you do not feel your sinfulness more. It seems to you as if the most alarming thing about you were your apathy, and, if you have any anxiety, it is anxiety caused by your own carelessness and easy-mindedness. You wish you were as far as the publican, so as to pray with some urgency, "God be merciful to me a sinner;" and, if you ever feel a momentary trepidation, it is from the view of your own composure in the face of your habitual ungodliness and its tremendous consequences.

But, sure enough, whether tranquil or terror-stricken, whether self-complacent or self-disgusted, you own yourself a sinner, and to you as a sinner Christ comes as a Saviour. Having died to atone, He lives to pity and pardon, to intercede and to save. It is your happy lot to be under the reign of God's grace, and not more truly this morning did the day-spring roll back the dark awning of

night, and let through the sunbeams, than Christ's advent has dispelled the dark frown of God's justice, and on lost humanity let through the smile of propitious Deity. "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Have done with dreaming; from the nightmare slumber in which sinful pleasures and ghastly illusions maintain their dance of death, come forth into Christ's own sunshine. Look up into that countenance which says so benignantly, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," and, by keeping in that light, your iniquities shall from you be put and kept away as far as the east is from the west—as far as summer noon is removed from the wintry nadir.* Do you, as a sinner, accept Christ as a Saviour, and at once for your "beauteous robe" you have His righteousness, even as for His recompense He has your soul.

To the door, or rather into the dwelling, of every sinner, Christ comes day by day. Each morning you awake, in His unrecalled Gospel and all-pervading presence there is a Saviour still beside you; and in order to share the

* Eph. v. 14; 1 John i. 7; Psalm ciii. 10—12.

gifts He bought for the rebellious, it only needs that you welcome *Him* and appropriate *them.* Do as your neighbour did: he awoke to-day in spirits perhaps more depressed than you, but he soon bethought himself, "The Lord liveth, blessed be my Rock;" and it was somewhat to this effect he spoke: "I am a worm, and no man; O Saviour, perfect Thy strength in my weakness. My sins are a weighty burden; I cannot carry them. O Lamb of God, I lay them upon Thee, and as Thou takest them away, grant me Thy peace. I am a burden to myself; such confusion, such corruption, such earthly-mindedness—so mean-spirited, with aims so paltry, and tastes so coarse, and conduct so contemptible, if sure of heaven, I could almost pray to be taken hence.

'Then of a sinner thou art rid,
And I am free from sin.'

But as it is not into the holy place that I am going, but into the tempting, dissipating, hardening world, come with me, O Thou Mighty and Merciful High Priest. Hide me in secret of Thy presence. Let Thy Holy Spirit dwell with me, keeping my heart pure

and my conscience tender,—supplying fortitude, patience, recollectedness, energy."

It was thus he prayed; and though not a word of reply was audible, there was an answer to that prayer. It is answered in a certain serenity of spirit and assurance Godward. It is answered in the believer's good hope, so different from the worldling's gay forgetfulness — in a conscience no longer callous, but sprinkled from dead works, freed from the encrusting hardness and the guilty bondage, and trying to please that Father whose lovingkindness it trusts and tenderly adores.

And if you, too, were wise, you would do as he has done. Your neighbour's Saviour you would accept as your own; and, without waiting for the Christ of to-morrow, you would welcome the Christ of to-day. Like Levi making a great feast, giving grateful reception to Him who comes to be the guest of sinners, and who, to as many as receive Him, gives a princely patent, "power to become the sons of God,"—extending the homage and hospitality of your best affections to that illustrious Visitant who into your

mean abode condescends to come with all His purifying ennobling resources;—like Zaccheus, you would find that in the person of a welcomed Saviour salvation was come into your soul.

A discovery which will prolong and expand into another:—He who has found a Saviour has found something more than a moral remedy or a good physician: he has found an all-sufficient, never-failing FRIEND. The immense benevolence of Jesus it needs faith of God's own giving to believe; it will need the experience of eternity to understand. But you are well off who have such a Friend—a Friend whose mysterious love found an attraction in your very misery, and whose kindness finds congenial occupation in doing for you "exceeding abundantly, above all that you can ask or think"—a Friend who, in saying, "Ask, and ye shall receive," has given you unlimited command of His services.

"Weak though we are, He still is near
To lead, console, defend;
In all our sorrow, sin, and fear,
Our all-sufficient Friend.

"From His high throne in bliss He deigns
Our every prayer to heed;
Bears with our folly, soothes our pains,
Supplies our every need.

"And from His love's exhaustless spring
Joys like a river come,
To make the desert bloom and sing
O'er which we travel home."

"Oh, Jesus, there is none like Thee!" as they know best who are most in His company. When your heart is near breaking, to Him tell the sorrow; and whilst at His feet the tears are still falling, over your wounded spirit He will be distilling that gentle balm which will at once assuage the pain and strengthen your heart. When in straits and sore perplexity, resort to this wonderful Counsellor, to whom all futures are foreknown—to whom no path is formidable; and who, if in the Valley of Achor no door should open, can save His people by giving them the wings as of an eagle, or snatching them up to His throne.* When harassed by unbelief, unhinged by contro-

* Rev. xii. 5, 14.

versy, or puzzled by hard questions—when books fail to satisfy and reasonings are not conclusive, commit the matter to the Lord; and as He sends forth His light and truth, "His Spirit is good," and by that best of casuists led to the land of uprightness, you will find at once intellectual repose and spiritual renovation. When weakened in the way, tired with working, tired with pain, tired with sinning—when resolution flags and old incentives fail, when you can neither creep nor run, "wait upon the Lord:" "wait, I say, upon the Lord;" and although it were sitting silent in His presence, those that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. You shall get courage to resume; and when you try again, you shall run and not be weary, you shall walk and not faint.*

"Jesus, my Master!" were words so sweet to St. Bernard, that he never wearied repeating them. And we want a MASTER, a LORD—an intellectual pre-eminence, to which we are compelled to do homage—a moral superiority, which bids us at once admire and despair. And "One is your Master, even

* Isa. xl. 31.

Christ," that great Teacher, whose words of "life and spirit" you have at once found saving truth and a personal transformation—that King of kings in whose life you have learned to live, in serving whom powers and faculties hitherto mute and unmeaning have discovered at once a sufficient use and an immortal bestowment—that Saviour-Sovereign, of whom it may be truly said, that the more entirely you obey Him, the more king-like you are—the more entirely you belong to Him, the more thoroughly are you master of yourself.

However, we want more than a Friend or a Master; we want not only to love and obey, we want to worship. We want some one to whom we shall not have given too much when we have given all our heart, and soul, and strength, and mind. And so it completes the case when revelation steps in, and for the express image of the Father claims that reverence which given to a creature were idolatry, but which withheld from Christ is robbery.* Obedient to the behest which bids even angels worship Him,† to the

* Phil. ii. 6—10. † Heb. i. 6.

name of Jesus our adoring spirit bows, and, in common with "every creature which is in heaven," we rejoice to ascribe "blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever." Him whom we have learned to trust as our Saviour, and love as our Friend, and follow as our Master, in wonder and worship, with Thomas, we also hail as our Lord and our God.

Temperaments are diverse; and love to the Lord Jesus may also vary according to that aspect of His work or person on which the enlightening Spirit has fixed the beholder's eye. Where there has gone before a deep sense of sin, with a fervor faintly shared by others the rescued spirit sings His praise who took it from the fearful pit, and the prevailing sentiment towards the great Deliverer is *gratitude.* Another may find himself attracted by the grace and truth, the majestic beauty and endearing goodness, of the Son of God, and by an *affinity* Heaven-imparted, to One fairer than the sons of men his spirit may ascend and cling. Whilst, in the awe-struck

homage of yet a third,—some bold transgressor violently arrested, or some proud intellect led captive, but still apt to struggle, —amidst all the gratitude and complacency there may sometimes revive such consciousness of sin as almost to shrink from a Presence too sacred, and the love may not be so perfect as to cast out all fear. Then, again, with the natural constitution may vary the amount of this affection and the modes of its manifestation. Silent and sensitive, to some an oral confession is an appalling martyrdom; whilst others would not feel honest unless they exclaimed, "Lord, I will follow Thee to prison and to death!" Just as, on the other hand, the love which, without speaking one syllable, a penitent utters in convulsive sobs and fast-flowing tears, and which the twice-converted Peter exhibits alike in zealous deeds and warm words of devotion, the son of Zebedee shows in the joy which his Master's presence imparts—in the rapture with which he sees Him come again—and in the expressive silence, the delicate discernment, which, without saying

aught about his love, or waiting to be bidden, when the Master moves, constrain him to arise and follow where He goes before.

Love to the Lord Jesus is the essence of religion; and, without discussing how much of it is needful to constitute a Christian, let us urge its unspeakable importance. If you have it not,—if the Lord Jesus is no Friend of yours, we cannot promise you much happiness in the present life; for the best happiness is to be found in Him to whom you still are a stranger. And with yourself there must be something radically wrong. To be capable of loving others, yet to have no love to Christ is a terrible anomaly; for which you account more terribly if you say, He is too kind, too holy, too much like God Himself. And your prospects are awful,—"If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be accursed when the Lord cometh." * So excellent in Himself is the Lord Jesus, and so suited to our need, that most reasonably and righteously God the Father employs Him as a test or touchstone of the sons of men. By the treatment He receives the thoughts of many

* 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

hearts are revealed; and if, after listening to that voice from heaven,—"This is my beloved Son; hear ye Him,"—if you will not hear Him, or if, looking at Him, you declare there is no beauty in Him, nothing for which you should desire Him—then Christ's home cannot be your heaven; and God has for you no other Saviour; nor is there the least prospect that eternity will ever bring you another Gospel. You have too much reason to desire that the Lord's coming may be remote; for what but consternation, and the curse of perpetual banishment from His presence, can the approach of an unloved Saviour bring you? And how enhanced will be your misery, should it prove that it was some horrid sin which hindered you from loving Him!—should it prove that, amongst the candidates who, with silent appeal or clamorous importunity, came day by day soliciting your preference, you gave a cold or angry look to the kind and holy Jesus, and put the prize into the hand of some lust or evil passion!

"God forbid that I should treat Him thus!" do you exclaim? "But I know not

what to do. I am told that I must get love to Christ; and, in order to get love, I must get faith; and, in order to get faith, I must ask the gift of the Holy Spirit. I would be so thankful to be able to say what Peter said; but, before I get that length, the process seems so intricate that I quite despair. And, besides,—forgive me for saying it,—but I feel that it is not in human nature to be frightened into faith and love."

True; but people are sometimes frightened out of apathy or recklessness. "If you go on at this rate," says a friendly monitor, "you will land in the workhouse," and the spendthrift pulls up. He bends his mind to the business of retrenchment; and, first amused, then interested with the experiment of living upon little, he at last grows habitually frugal; and, in as far as he was startled out of wastefulness, you may say that he has been frightened into forethought and economy. So some have been frightened into health and a long life. "If you go on at this rate," says the faithful physician, "next autumn will see you in your grave;" and the man believes it, and gives up his dissipation, and takes the prescription, and attains a green old age.

So the Bible would be a cruel book if it was not with a kind intention that it employed such alarming language—"He that believeth not is condemned already, and shall be lost eternally. He that loves not the Lord Jesus shall be accursed at His coming." These are true sayings, and terrible; but, in order that they may cease to be frightful, your wisdom is to quit that class to whom they apply.

For, if he who believes not is lost, he who believes in the Lord Jesus is safe: he shall never perish, nor come into condemnation. If you would throw yourself on His grace and power, there is nothing which He has been to others but He is willing to be to you. If just as He is you go to Him just as you are, He will receive you; and if you keep near Him He will not only forgive your iniquities but heal your diseases, and will crown you with loving-kindness and tender mercies.

"How soon?" This instant; for He is now waiting to be gracious. On His side no further preparation is needful. *There* "all things are ready." Incline your ear, and go to Him who, with arms extended worldward,

and wide enough to embrace us all, says, "Come unto Me." To prepare the Saviour for the sinner nothing farther is needful: and do you, O sinner, without farther preparation, come. Halt, maimed, and ragged, without waiting till your raiment is more reputable or your lameness has gone off, without waiting till your faith is strong, or your repentance has confirmed into saintly character, go to the Lord Jesus just as you are, and He will supply all that you need. He will give you a place at that feast which He has prepared for the unprepared, for those whom the invitation surprises in ditches and on dust-heaps, on highways and in hedges, and whom the robe of His own providing, together with His own exalted fellowship and His Spirit's reviving energy, transforms into the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty.

Alas! we are slow to understand. Even whilst gazing into the Gospel, how our eyes are holden so as not to see its most marvellous announcement! As has been well remarked, "The power of God is not the inmost centre of His being, but His holiness and love are the power above His omnipotence. He re-

veals Himself not only as a holy Lawgiver and Judge, demanding our services, but as *holy, communicative love*, proposing it to Himself as His end in creation—the production of loving beings, made after His own likeness."* To get hold of this truth is to get hold of the principle which underlies the Gospel, and which comes out in every faithful saying. It is to get as much insight as revelation itself imparts into the deep things of Deity, and it is the firmest foot-hold which faith can hope to gain when wishing to feel assured and confiding towards Infinite Excellence. God is love; and when He made man at the first, He made him after His own image—full of affectionate devotion, full of loving-kindness. And although man has destroyed himself—although, from the broken cistern of the human heart, this living water has all run out, Jesus has brought it back again. Himself the manifestation of Heaven's compassion, and the great magazine of God's mercies to mankind, we drink the living water when we believe

* Dorner, in that great repertory of sound and seasonable theology, "The British and Foreign Evangelical Review," vol. xi., p. 630.

His own declaration, and surrender to the Father's love. We drink the living water when we taste the sweetness of pardoning mercy, and suffer ourselves to be once more beloved by God. We drink the living water, and, instead of perishing, we possess eternal life; for we believe that great love which God had toward us when He sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. And thus believing, we become new creatures. We get again some of those lineaments which were lost in the Fall. We begin again to love God whom we have not seen, as also the brother whom we see;—thus again evincing a recovered celestial sonship; for "God is love, and every one that loveth is born of God."

Passing through the desert, you pick up a withered gourd. You are amazed at its lightness, and much do you marvel how an object so bulky should prove such absolute levity. Yet you can understand how it happened. Lying there in the burning sand, no wonder that every particle of sap is absorbed, and that its moisture is turned into the drought of summer.

But now that you have come to this foun-

tain, cast it in, and leave it a little. How is it now? Does it feel full and solid? Nay, cast it out on this mighty and horizonless main; and, after it has nodded and tumbled a while on the billows, stretch forth your hand, and take it up once more. Is it not light and empty as ever? And how is this? With an ocean on every side, able to fill it millions of times over and over, why does it continue empty and void? Why, but because it is closed all round and round. There is not an open valve, nor the smallest crevice at which a drop can enter. It continues empty and hollow, because water-proof and hermetically sealed.

Have you never felt your own heart like that rattling gourd?—dry, empty, unloving? The deepest thing in all your nature—do you not feel that that deepest thing is a dismal void? Where love to God should be,—the spirit's strength and blessedness,—does it not feel a great vacuity?—a thirsty chasm?—a dreary, sounding emptiness? And why is this? Is God unloved, because unlovely? Is He unenjoyed, because unapproachable and incommunicable? Is it a dry, parched land—a dusty, burning desert, on which your poor

soul is cast out to pine and shrivel?—a world from which, like the last shower which fell on Sahara, and which is long since forgotten, God's kindness is long since departed?

Ah, no! the gourd is afloat. All round is the Gospel. On every side stretches the multitudinous expanse of God's mercies. It was He who shed down sweet sleep on your eyelids last night, and roused you this morning to blessings wide as your horizon and high as His own heaven. It is He who, every Sabbath in the sermon, and every day in His own Book, keeps whispering, "Trust me: love me: believe me: return to your spirit's Father: oh, be reconciled to God!" And if your spirit is not long since inundated and surcharged with the inflowings of fatherly affection, and the raptures of filial devotion, it is because unbelief has made it love-proof, and, amidst the full flood of God's mercies, keeps it hermetically sealed.

Such is the soul of the worldling. Such is the heart of the unbeliever. It is a little self-contained desert afloat on an ocean of blessing; and it is only by breaking the heart—by making an opening in the love-excluding

unbelief, crushing in its arrogance and self-sufficiency—that the same stroke of God's Spirit which reveals its own emptiness, lets in something of the encompassing Gospel, and fills it with peace and joy in believing.

It is this holy love,—it is this opening of the heart to God's good will,—which draws back to Himself that heart in grateful devotion and tender affiance. The love of God you cannot overrate, nor from its infinite well-spring drink too largely. "God is love;" and to believe that love, of which the sinless creation is the boundless sphere, and of which Calvary is the focus concentered, the bright and burning expression,—to believe that it is not a cold law, a dark fate, a sombre power, in which you live and move and have your being; but to believe that it is God's great life which now encircles and will eternally enclasp your little life; to believe that a Being most wise, most holy, most tenderly merciful, hovers round your daily path, guards your bed of slumber, and listens to your every prayer; to believe that that God whom Jesus loved so ardently, in communion with whom He spent the nights so pleasantly, and into whose hands

He commended His [illegible]it so serenely; to believe that this God and Father of the Lord Jesus is for Jesus' sake a fatherly, loving God to you;—to get grace to believe this is to learn the lesson which the Incarnate Word was constantly teaching, and the faith of which gave to John and his brethren their fulness of joy.

If you, too, would be happy, learn to love. View God as He reveals Himself. Believe Him to be what Jesus said; believe Him to be what Jesus was. When any mercy or any happy moment comes, remember the pleasant truth—God Himself is near. And just as in your chamber there is a brightness, and though you cannot see the firmament, you know the unclouded sun is shining: so in your home there is health, there is comfort, there is a glow of affection, and you feel, How sacred is this happiness! It is a smile from God. And just as your little child wakes up and finds a present on his pillow, and shouts forth his wonder and his thanks: so when, through no labour of your hands, through no procurement or desert of yours, there comes to you some good and perfect gift, you cry,

"Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ! My Heavenly Father has been here; for it is thus He giveth to His beloved in their sleep."

FEED MY SHEEP.

"Βόσκε τὰ ἀρνία μου.
Ποίμαινε τὰ πρόβατά μου.
Βόσκε τὰ πρόβατά μου."

Exposed to many dangers, in themselves resourceless and feeble, at once dependent and gregarious, the sheep of the pasture supply a most obvious emblem for many of our human communities or associations. But although the king, the prophet, the father, are in the Bible all spoken of as "shepherds," it almost looks as if the occupation had been instituted on very purpose to image forth the work of the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls—of Him who, having laid down His life for the sheep, is, in a sense pre-eminent and exclusive, "the Good Shepherd"—of Him who gathers the lambs with His arm and carries them in His bosom—and of whom every

believer may sing with the Psalmist, "He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me."

On the other hand, it was the grace and wisdom of the Saviour, before going out of sight, that something of His own pastoral work He assigned to His servants. "He gave some to be apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the building up the body of Christ." To Peter, and to all in any equivalent position, He said, "Lovest thou me? Feed my sheep."

The first thing we notice is the connexion of the two things. "Lovest thou me? Feed MY lambs." "Lovest thou me? Feed my sheep." 'After this, there is little that you can do directly for myself. There will be no need to draw the sword, and smite any one in defending me, for my life will never again be in danger. There will be no need to extend to me the hospitalities of your

home, as on that day when your mother-in-law rose from the fever to minister to us—no need for you to go into the city to buy bread, whilst your weary Master waits by the well; for henceforth I hunger no more, neither thirst any more. But as you will still love me, and still wish to show it, here is the opportunity — here are the objects of my affection. If thou lovest me, feed my sheep —*my* sheep, for the Father hath given them to me, and none shall pluck them from the Father's hand—*my* sheep, for I have laid down my life, and bought them with my blood. But I hand them over to thee.* Simon, son of Jonas, and all you apostles, for

* "To Peter it was said, not 'Feed *thy* sheep,' but 'Feed *Mine*.' Therefore Peter is a pastor, not independently and of himself, but as identified with the Chief Shepherd (*in corpore pastoris*). If he were to feed his own sheep, those whom he fed would soon become goats."—*Augustini Sermones*, cclxxxv. 5. In the same spirit, and with characteristic terseness, is the Note of Grotius: "Pasce; id est, ipsis, non tibi, consule; suade, non coge: oves non tuas sed meas." "Feed, that is, take care, not of yourself, but of them; use kindness, not compulsion; they are not your sheep, but mine."

my sake take care of them, and treat them kindly.' A charge which will recal to many minds the verses of Mr. M'Cheyne, written beside this very Sea of Tiberias:—

"How pleasant to me thy deep blue wave,
O Sea of Galilee!
For the glorious One who came to save,
Hath often stood by thee!

"Fair are the lakes in the land I love
Where pine and heather grow;
But thou hast loveliness far above
What Nature can bestow.

"It is not that the wild gazelle
Comes down to drink thy tide;
But He that was pierced to save from hell
Oft wandered by thy side.

"It is not that the fig-tree grows,
And palms, in thy soft air,
But that Sharon's fair and bleeding Rose
Once spread its fragrance there.

"Graceful around thee the mountains meet,
Thou calm reposing sea;
But, ah, far more! the beautiful feet
Of Jesus walked o'er thee.

"And was it beside this very sea
The new-risen Saviour said,
Three times to Simon, 'Lov'st thou Me?
My lambs and sheep then feed.'

"O Saviour! gone to God's right hand!
Yet the same Saviour still,
Graved on Thy heart is this lovely strand,
And every fragrant hill.

"Oh, give me, Lord, by this sacred wave,
Threefold Thy love divine,
That I may feed, till I find my grave,
Thy flock—both Thine and mine!"

It is this love to the Saviour which has been the great secret of each successful ministry. It was this which led the devoted Macdonald to exchange his London congregation for mission work in Calcutta, and which, in answer to his people's entreaty, made him say, "If any chain forged on earth could bind me, that memorial might; but I feel that, contrary to my own weak nature, all ties are made as flax to me. I feel bound in spirit, and I cannot but go. I feel that I have this night come to the brink of waters, deep, dark, and strong; and never has my flesh

trembled as now. But there is a voice from the Unseen which says, 'It is I; be not afraid.' That voice I know; it is 'the Beloved' who speaks. I must not shrink. I may not fear; but will follow whithersoever He calls. I am not yours, my beloved brethren and flock, neither am I my own. His I am, and must be; therefore, *I go.*"* It was this which enabled the great English evangelist to write on the day of his ordination, "When the bishop laid his hand upon me, I gave myself up to be a martyr for Him who hung upon the cross for me. Till you hear of my dying for, or in my work, you will not be apprised of all the preferment that is expected by George Whitefield." It is this which from our shy and shut-up spirits takes off the constraint and the coldness, and which, carrying us over our finical reserve and fastidious scruples, makes us instant in season and out of season. It is this which reconciles the accomplished scholar to live among savages, and which carries up to the sultry attic, or down into the damp and airless cellar, the

* Dr. Tweedie's "Life of Rev. J. Macdonald," p. 301.

refined and high-bred daughters of a Christian land. It is this which makes the patient and long-suffering teacher put up with the waywardness, the selfishness, the ingratitude, and inattention of his scholars; and it is this which made Peter himself and Paul so gentle and much-enduring amongst converts very quarrelsome and carnal, very crude and un-Christlike: for even amongst these wild sheep might be lambs of Christ's fold, and it was Himself who was saying, "Lovest thou me? Then tend my sheep; take care of my lambs; feed my flock."

In a letter to his mother, the fervid Payson writes:—"Oh, what a Master do I serve! I have known nothing, felt nothing, all my days, in comparison with what I now see in Him. Never was preaching such sweet work; never did the world seem such a nothing; never did heaven appear so near, so sweet, so overwhelmingly glorious. God's promises appear so strong, so real, more solid than the rocks and everlasting hills; and His perfections, what shall I say of them? When I think of one, I wish to dwell on it for ever; but another and another equally glorious

claims a share of admiration; and when I begin to praise, I wish never to cease, but to find it the commencement of that song which will never end. Often have I felt as if I could that moment throw off the body, without staying to 'first go and bid them farewell that are at home in my house.' Let who will be rich, or admired, or prosperous, it is enough for me that there is such a God as Jehovah, such a Saviour as Jesus, and that they are infinitely and unchangeably glorious and happy."* No wonder that, when such was the frame of the preacher's mind, a great blessing began to attend the ministry—a blessing which has left Pentecostal associations around the name of Payson and over the scene of his labours in Portland. Were such fervour ours; were we only suffering our minds to dwell on the grace and glory of Immanuel till a faint assent became a full assurance, and till the concession of His claims became an absorbing sense of personal obligation, the warmth of our feelings would lend a glow to our words, and the Gospel of a shining countenance would at once interpret

* "Memoir of Edw. Payson," chap. xix. p. 365.

and confirm the glad tidings of the chapter read or the sermon spoken.

2. Peter and his colleagues were evangelists. It was part of their vocation to bring into the fold the sheep not yet gathered—the wild and unreclaimed. But they were also pastors. That is to say, it was their business to provide for the flock food convenient—food for the sheep, food for the lambs.

A wise and holy man, the father of many faithful—I mean the Rev. Henry Venn—has recorded this experience,—"The great danger is, from surfeiting children with religious doctrines or over-much talk. Doctrines they are too young to understand, and too frequent talking wearies them. Many parents err in expecting the religion of a child should be the same as their own. I did not give mine formal instructions till they were eight years old, and then chiefly set before them the striking facts in the Old Testament, or the miracles in the New. I also laboured much to set before them the *goodness* of our God in things which they could understand, such as the comforts which we enjoyed

together. Watching providential occurrences, I made use of them to give a body and substance to spiritual truth. One method used to affect them much—carrying them to see an afflicted child of God, rejoicing in tribulation, and speaking of His love. To this day they tell of one and another whom they saw happy, though poor and in pain."*

The goodness of God, and His power to make His people happy, are great lessons; and so are God's holiness and the hatefulness of sin. But even to little children far younger than eight years old there is something wonderfully arresting in the story of Bethlehem, and something singularly engaging in His pattern who grew up at Nazareth in favour with God and with all people. And there must be in ourselves some mismanagement if in the Book which tells about Joseph and his brethren, about David and the giant, about Daniel in the den, we can get nothing arresting or entertaining for the youngest. And we are sure that in his own later day, if a group of little children had gathered round this self-same apostle, he could have enchained

* "Venn's Life" (1835), p. 429.

them with the story of what had befallen himself,—how he was thrown into prison, and was sentenced to die, and how, the night before he was sleeping, and all of a sudden something broke through his dream, and he opened his eyes, and, though a lovely countenance bent over him, and all around was a sweet, pure light, it was not heaven; for there slept the soldiers, and here on his own hands were the manacles; but he had hardly time to look at them when the chains fell to the floor, and through self-opening gates and silent sentinels, he and his bright guardian passed out into the street, and he went on to a house where he found his friends assembled and spending the night in praying for Peter. And they would have gladly listened as he told them what wonderful things he had seen the Lord Jesus do,—His walk on the stormy water, the feast which He gave to five thousand people on five loaves and two little fishes, His raising the dead girl to life, and the son of the widow. And he would have told them how there never had been in this world any one so gentle and kind,—how one day in Jerusalem some mothers

brought their little children, and wished that He would give them His blessing; and though the disciples thought it a pity that His time should be taken up with such small children, He looked at them so kindly, and held out His open arms to them, and took them up and blessed them, saying, "Suffer them to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom." And he would have told them about this very morning at the Lake of Galilee, and how, when going back to heaven, Jesus was still thinking about the little children, and how He had said to Simon himself, "Take care of them. Feed my lambs."

Strong meat belongeth to those that are of full age; but doses of divinity—the hard questions and high matters of the faith, are not the food convenient for the little ones. The sheep can eat grass and hay, but with its little curly fleece, the lamb in April only plays in the green pasture, and does not care to eat the budding clover and sprouting grass, of which it will be glad enough even in the shape of hay next winter. Nor is the shepherd angry because the truss or bundle which he fetches from the rick has no attraction for the frolic-

some young creatures. These bundles of stored-up theology are for the farther grown; but in the meanwhile the simple story and the easy lesson better suit the opening mind. And by way of practical piety, teach them to pray reverently, yet most confidingly and lovingly, to the ever-present Saviour. Encourage everything that is unselfish and generous—everything that is kind and obliging. Let them read the "Children's Missionary Record," and get interested in the salvation of the heathen. And let them have the pleasure sometimes of conferring kindness on the poor, so that they may enter betimes into the spirit of that maxim which runs so deep through the work of Redemption, and which is such a characteristic of vital Christianity: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

The sheep also must be fed. It is the duty of a pastor to keep back nothing that is profitable. Most probably he will have his own likings and preferences; but every truth has its use; all Scripture is profitable. As tastes are so different and as in the same audience there is great variety of capacity, and feeling,

and circumstances, the wise steward, in dispensing the Word of Life, will seek to suit each want and exigency. Happy the minister who can say with the apostle, "I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. I have kept back nothing that is profitable."

3. The providing of food convenient is, however, not the whole of the pastoral office, whether that pastorate be parental, ministerial, or prophetic. It is worth noticing, that in the original the same word is not used all the three times. The first and third time it is *βόσκε*, "feed"; the second time it is *ποίμαινε*, "tend," "do the whole work of the shepherd." * And of that work one part was to go out and in before the flock. If he was a good shepherd the sheep got fond of him, and came to know his very voice. They liked him and trusted him, and, as they had no fear of his leading them to poisonous pastures or dangerous places, they went out and in and followed him.

And so instruction is only one part of the

* In Scotland, "herd the sheep."

pastoral office. Quite as important as instruction is example; and he alone is a good shepherd who, not content with telling the road to heaven, "leads the way." He alone is a good shepherd who to instruction and example adds affection and vigilance,—who, seeing the wolf coming—disastrous error or terrible temptation—warns the flock, and does all he can to repel the danger. He alone is a good shepherd who is full of sympathy and tenderness, binding up that which is broken, and strengthening that which is feeble. He alone is a good shepherd who feels as a personal sorrow the inconsistencies and declensions of believers; and who, if one were wandering, would leave the ninety-and-nine in the wilderness and go after that which is lost.

But if it be so, there is no shepherd sufficiently "good" save Jesus Himself. My dear friends, some of you can say, "The Lord is my Shepherd;" and a good Shepherd He has been to you. You have wanted for nothing. He has led you and fed you all your life long; and has often led you into places so pleasant that they are a joy to remember. As He asked the disciples, "When I sent you out without scrip, lacked ye any-

thing ?"—so at this stage of the journey were He asking you, most of you would be constrained to reply, "Nothing, Lord." And He has often restored your soul—often spared your life, or rescued and revived your endangered piety. You have gone away from the Good Shepherd—got out on the face of the precipice, or been entangled in the deep and treacherous quag, and were in positive danger of being drowned in the world's corruption—when, just in time, a kind arm caught hold of you, and, carried on an unseen shoulder, you were again deposited in safety, and led in the paths of righteousness. And now, though you were walking in the valley of the shadow of death, you need fear no evil. There are many "shadows of death." Some scenes are so agonizing and terrible that the man who has once fairly got through them may say very naturally, "Surely the bitterness of death is past." There are calamities, bereavements, desolations, which, for the moment, sunder you from earth much the same as if you were absent from the body; and fierce diseases which come so near to dissolution, that you ask, "Tell me, my soul, can this be death?" But if these are sha-

dows of death, on the other hand, the believer's dissolution is but the shadow of dying. The sting of death is sin; but if you be resting on a sin-atoning, sin-forgiving Saviour, the deadliness will be taken out of death. But still, you have the valley to traverse. With its dusky chamber, and its black coffin, and its sunless sepulchre, it looks dark enough; but, when the time comes, you need not fear to go down into it. The footsteps of the flock all point that way, and plain as any are the Good Shepherd's own. Nor is it so dark as it looks. There is light at either end. The light of the Gospel, and of promises exceeding great and precious, penetrates far in, and the glory about to be revealed shines clear and bright beyond. And you need fear no evil, for One is with you whose rod and staff can comfort. As a guilty, weak, and helpless worm, cast yourself on redeeming grace; and on a faithful Saviour cast all the objects dear to you, and all the work you have been unable to finish; and fear no evil. The valley is short, the Lord your Shepherd is near, and yonder is the house of the Lord, where now you are going to dwell for ever.

SIMON PETER.

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me."

Deep down in a hollow lies the Lake of Galilee. Rimmed round with a fine white gravel, and on the eastern side walled in by lofty hills, for the space of five miles broad and twelve miles long, it fills up the mighty fissure which stretches from the base of Lebanon to the mountains of Moab; and, fed by the river which rushes down to it from the northern highlands, it offers an abundant spoil to the fisherman. On the western side is a broad, warm plain, irrigated by copious

springs; and, between its high temperature and abundant irrigation, to its fortunate occupants this "land of Gennesareth" must have been an inexhaustible granary. But there were several villages which depended more directly on the lake itself; and just as on the coasts of Norway and Scotland we have various Fiska-fiords and Fisher-rows, so on the shores of Gennesareth, and on opposite sides, there appear to have been two fish-towns, or Bethsaidas.

In the western, or Galilean Bethsaida, were born and brought up two boys, called respectively Andrew and Simon. Their father was a fisherman, and they followed the same occupation. Which of these two Barjonases, or Johnsons, was the oldest, we do not know; but by far the most marked and forcible character was Simon. With a warm heart, a stirring spirit, and a sturdy constitution, "when he was young he girded himself, and went whithersoever he would." We can easily imagine him climbing the tall palm-tree for its dates, or heading exploring expeditions up the Jordan, when the molten snow came foaming and cascading down those shelves

which pass it swiftly to the lake below. Rash and venturesome, he was doubtless an occasional anxiety to his mother, even although she was the wife of a boatman; but, prompt in action, frank and generous, he was a favorite with his companions, and was born to be a leader. Whether on the playground or among grave and grown-up comrades, he was the man to say, "I go a-fishing;" and Nathaniel and Didymus, and whosoever else were present, would fall in, "We also go with thee."

A hard and rugged life: to lie in the stern-sheets, soaked with rain, or numbed with the night wind; and full of uncertainties—one night such a take that the nets are dragged to the bottom, or broken; another night, nothing at all: sudden squalls, canvas blown to tatters, boat capsized, the fish restored to the stormy deep, the strong swimmer scarcely saved. Yet not without its softening, solemnizing influences; halcyon seasons—

> "When marshalled on the nightly plain,
> The glittering host bestud the sky,"

and when it is as natural to look up unto the

heavens from the liquid expanse as from the grassy slopes of Bethlehem; moonlit nights, when balm comes off the shore, and when the nightingale is singing in the orchards of Tiberias; dim, mysterious nights, when hyænas are laughing and demoniacs howling amongst the tombs of Gergesa, and, like ghosts in procession, white vapours flit over the cliff, or go streaming out and in the hill-side sepulchres.

Simon had grown up and was married, and was living with his mother-in-law at Capernaum, when we first make his acquaintance; and we make it in interesting circumstances. He was not, like so many of his countrymen, a self-complacent formalist. He felt himself a sinner; and when John came preaching "the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins," Simon and his brother went all the way to Bethabara to hear him. Andrew was the first to find that "Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world;" and when by Andrew Simon was introduced to Jesus, He said, "Thou art Simon, the son of Jonas; thou shalt be called Cephas (a rock)"—a name not so descriptive of what he was, as prophetic

of what he was yet to become. Going back to Galilee, and by turns plying his craft or attending on Christ, he was not finally detached from the fishing-boat till that day—so like the morning here mentioned—when a miraculous draught filled to the point of sinking two boats, and in the presence of superhuman power Simon's self-consciousness was startled into exclaiming, "Depart from me; for I am *a sinful man*, O Lord." But Jesus reassured him: "Fear not: from henceforth thou shalt catch men;" and, leaving all, he arose, and thenceforward followed his miraculous Master.

With his manner of life in Christ's company you are well acquainted; for of all the apostles he is the most conspicuous. Ardent and honest, full of eager affection, but in delicate discernment and prudent forecast somewhat deficient; frank of speech and swift in action, yet apt to be startled by his own boldness—apt to break down after a boastful promise or a brilliant beginning,—his was the character which is sure to be often vexed with itself, and of which every one sees at a glance the faults or the foibles.

Still, who does not admire his genuineness, his warmth and energy? A chain-cable may have such a flaw, that, run quickly out, its own weight will snap it; whilst a single link of the self-same cable may be drawn into a wire that will multiply tenfold the strength of a packthread ever so long. And so a small portion of Simon's devotedness, in union with a colder and more cautious temperament, might have spun out into a respectable and consistent career of the average duration. But for holding great ships in stormy weather chain-cables are wanted,—bellwire and packthread won't do; and after the link was repaired—when the fracture in Simon's faith was restored—he became a power in that primitive Church—a reliance and a holdfast to his brethren.

It was a great love and an overmastering which he had for his Lord, and it does us good to see it. The manifestation might be occasionally precipitate or misjudging, but in a cold, calculating world it does us good to see a generous enthusiasm. At the first announcement, "It is the Lord," we like to see him leaping over the vessel's side, and plunging,

swimming, panting towards the shore; and the moment the Lord says, "Bring of the fish which ye have now caught," we like to see him rushing forward, and hauling high and dry the net which more deliberate comrades had safely dragged to the shallows. When Jesus poured water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, we appreciate the feeling which, distressed and almost shocked at such excessive condescension, exclaimed, "Thou shalt never wash my feet!" but when Jesus replied, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me," instantly rejoined, "Then not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." And when, startled at the Divine claims of Jesus, many followers drew off and walked no more with Him, in answer to the appeal, "Will ye also go away?" we are comforted by Peter's memorable avowal, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the son of the living God."

This devotion to his Lord was the grand feature, the saving element in Peter's cha-

racter,—which even when cas down was not destroyed,—which even when so disastrously eclipsed was not extinguished. And happy they who have a similar love to the Saviour. Like the modern ship in mid-ocean, which, when the propeller fouls, or the axle breaks, has still sails to carry her forward,—which, when a timber is stove, has water-tight compartments sufficient to sustain her still buoyant,—happy they who, even if courage should collapse, or faith itself encounter some shattering collision, have got enough of the new nature's love to Christ to keep them still afloat—those sails of affection which make the disabled vessel still answer to the helm. Happy the Cranmer who, on the strength of this affection, survives to burn "that unworthy hand;" happy the Peter who at the first look of his Master dissolves in repentance, and lives to declare, with a decision and ingenuousness which nothing can gainsay, "Lord, thou knowest all things: thou knowest that I love thee."

The warning of what awaited him, which the Lord now gave to Peter, was divinely adapted to his peculiar cast of mind, and in conjunc-

tion with the words, "Follow me," was fitted at once to console and solemnize the apostle.

"When thou wast young thou girdedst thyself." Rapidity and self-reliance have always been your way. An hour ago you girded your fisher's coat around you, and it is still wet with your weltering through the water. What you then did you have always been doing, acting on impulse, and girding yourself, and going wherever you pleased. "But"—and there must have been something in the way in which this was spoken which conveyed a peculiar import, for it was at once understood as predicting to Peter a death like Christ's own—"But when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thine hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. Follow me." And whilst we can quite believe that to the eager disciple so full of revenge at himself and of devotion to his Lord, there was at this fervid moment joy in the prospect of being conformed to Christ in His crucifixion, in conjunction with all that had occurred it was a sobering consideration that the days of freedom and self-disposal were about to be succeeded

by days of captivity, and a death of violence.

But by that death "he should glorify God."

It is a singular history, older than the time of Peter, as old, we may say, as the death of Abel, and accounted for by man's mournful antipathy to God's holiness and God's truth: in this world of ours, when any one stands out from his fellows severely loyal to his God, that constant tendency to exclaim, "Away with such a fellow from the earth;" that perpetual effort to extirpate unwelcome truth by slaying and burying out of sight the witness-bearer.

Yet in all these martyrdoms God is glorified. Of the death that Peter died we possess no authentic record; but long before his own time came, an earnest was given in the stoning of Stephen, whose angel face and dying prayer made the first impression on a young man called Saul, and from around whose grave the mourners dispersed to go everywhere preaching the Word. And God was glorified in the funeral pile of Polycarp, who, when the proconsul said, "Curse Christ, and I release thee," made answer, "Six and eighty

years have I served Him, and He has done me nothing but good. How then can I curse my Lord and Saviour?" and who, before the fire was lighted, prayed, as we could imagine Peter praying, "Almighty God, Father of thy beloved Son Jesus Christ, through whom we have received the knowledge of thyself; I praise thee that thou hast judged me worthy of this day and of this hour, to take part in the number of thy witnesses, in the cup of thy Christ." God was glorified in such confessors as the martyr Babylas of Antioch, who marched to the place of execution, singing, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." He was glorified by Savonarola, saying, as he mounted the scaffold, "My Lord, innocent of all crime, died for my sins; and shall not I willingly give up my life for the love of Him?" It was glory to God when, under the walls of Balliol College, a Royal pardon was offered to Ridley, if he would even then recant, and he replied, "So long as my breath is in my body, I will never deny my Lord Christ and His known truth: God's will be done in me." And, whilst they glorified God by testifying

to His truth—laying down their lives in allegiance to a risen and reigning Redeemer—God glorified Himself in the support vouchsafed to His servants; so that, like the martyrs of Lyons, in their superiority to every torment, they seemed already absent from the body; and He glorified Himself in defeating the designs of the devil, so that it has grown to a proverb, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church."

In our country it is long since any died for Christ's sake and the Gospel. Foxe's "Martyrology" is a black-letter book, and it is nearly a hundred years since the "Scots Worthies" was written. As we look at the engravings of the former, so quaint and so wooden, we hardly realize that they were men of like passions with ourselves, who went through such ordeals, and crowned lives of suffering with deaths of agony. We find it hard to believe that there was once a St. Botolph's Church in Aldgate, from under whose shadow, one dark morning in February, a woman with her two little daughters rushed out and interrupted the armed procession which was conveying forth from London a

saintly old man; and, as he and his wife and two children knelt down in the street, and he prayed such a prayer that the very officers wept, and then said, "Farewell, my dear wife; be of good comfort, for I am quiet in my conscience," and then blessed the little daughter in his arms, and said to the other, "God bless thee; I pray you all stand stedfast unto Christ and His Word, and keep you from idolatry;" and his wife answered, "God be with thee, dear Rowland; I will, with God's grace, meet thee at Hadleigh"—we find it difficult to believe that to Hadleigh he was going to be burned alive; but, when we have somewhat entered into the feelings of the martyr and his noble wife, we can better understand what is included in Christ's "Follow me." And so, when we picture to ourselves the "heart of Mid-lothian," and an old Christian in his cell, bending over his Bible, and they open the door, and bring in a basket, and produce a fair-haired youthful head, newly severed; "Do you know this, Mr. Cameron?" "I know it, I know it. My son's—my own dear son's. It is the Lord; good is the will of the Lord, who cannot

wrong me nor mine, but has made goodness and mercy follow us all our days"—we wonder how weak humanity survived such tragedies; and, as we think of all whom the headsman's axe left widows, and all whom inquisitorial terrors hunted from their home, and try to estimate that long agony by which a martyr Church has maintained its testimony, we begin to appreciate the awful privilege assigned to Peter, and to the myriads who, like him, have trod in the Master's bleeding track since that morning when, stretching forth His own pierced hands, Jesus said to the apostle, "Follow me."

The fires of Smithfield are extinct, the Grassmarket gallows is taken down; and most of us expatiate at our ease in that wealthy place to which, through fire and through water, our fathers fought their way. But piety is not yet quite popular, nor do all men take the Lord Jesus for their King. There are still those who, in the effort to live godly, must suffer persecution. There are Sabbath honourers who lose their employment or their trade, and keepers of a conscience who forfeit patronage and profit. And not unfrequently

I fear, is the praying youth interrupted in his devotion by scoffing room-mates, just as the Bible-reading servant or church-going artisan is made a butt and a byword by rude and jeering comrades. Nor is it easily borne. It tries the feelings, and it tries the principle; it tries the temper too, and it sometimes hurts both health and spirits. But, after all, you have the best of it. You are upon the winning side. The tables will soon be turned; the laugh will not always go against the saints. Even now, O scoffer, He that sitteth in the heavens laughs at you. The Lord holds you in derision; and when at last He speaks to you in wrath, you will feel the sharp recoil of arrows shot against the heavens. It is sorry wit which makes wise men look sadly at the speaker, and a poor jest is that which with shame and everlasting contempt covers its author.

"When thou wast young thou girdedst thyself;" and surely this was no discredit to Simon. We all like to see young people active, self-helpful, and handy; and we always feel rather ashamed when we find grown persons retaining so much of infancy, or anti-

cipating second childhood so early that they can do nothing for themselves, but need help in putting on their attire. On the other hand, when God so determines, there is a graceful submission. When old age creeps on, or infirmities still more disabling, let us cheerfully surrender, and be thankful to those who are good enough to do anything for us, or carry us any whither. Old Betty was converted late in life, and though very poor, was very active. She visited the sick; out of her own poverty she gave to those who were still poorer, collected a little money from others when she could give none of her own, and told many a one of the love of the Saviour. At last she caught cold and rheumatism, and lay in bed month after month pain-worn and helpless. A good minister went to see her, and asked, if after her active habits, she did not find the change very hard to bear. "No, Sir, not at all. When I was well I used to hear the Lord say day by day, 'Betty, go here; Betty, go there; Betty, do this; Betty, do that;' and I used to do it as well as I could; and now I hear Him say every day,

'Betty, lie still and cough.'" * By a sweet submission glorify God. By patience and thankfulness render it delightful to those around to minister to your necessities, and seek to give them in return the edifying spectacle of pain well endured in strength of God's own giving. And thus, whilst He makes your bed in your sickness—thus, whilst old and grey-headed, He keeps His everlasting arms around you, you will show His strength to the new generation, His power and faithfulness to those who are coming after—a good confession, a gentle and not inglorious martyrdom.

* American Presbyter.

THE DISCIPLE WHOM JESUS LOVED.

"Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved, following."

But which was the disciple whom Jesus did not love? Philip, the first to follow and the last to understand; Thomas, slow to believe, but, once convinced, so prompt with his confession; the guileless Bartholomew; the homely, practical, unsentimental James; the eager, warm-hearted Peter;—Jesus loved them all. They had each a place in His intercessions when He prayed for those whom the Father had given Him. They had each a place in His atonement when He made His soul an offering for sin; and each of them has now a home in His heaven.

There was one, however, whom the Lord distinguished from the rest so far as to evince

a special confidence or congeniality, and to whom there was conceded by his brethren an epithet which consenting Christendom has delighted to confirm; and we may spend a few moments profitably in considering those traits or features which earned for him that highest of distinctions, "the disciple whom Jesus loved."

As we apprehend his character, the first thing which strikes us is a peculiar intuition. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," and God shall be seen in them. That great sight, God dwelling in the midst of men, was early disclosed to this pure-hearted beholder, and through the rest of life he seems never to have lost the open vision. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us full of grace and truth; and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only-begotten of the Father." "The Life was manifested"—the Living One and the Lifegiver—"and that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you." The glorious God, through the face of Jesus, shined into his soul, and through his own bright features and blameless walk that glory shone forth again—

passionless, pure-hearted, reflecting the glory which he gazed upon.

When you float on a tranquil bay, and through its sleeping waters look down to the glistening sand and the sea-plants that scarcely move in the waveless tide, instantly you know that it is long since any storm was here; for had there been a recent tempest, by this time the surface might be smooth, but the brine would be muddy, and the tender sea-plants would be tangled and torn: so when you look into John's pellucid pages, such a meekness and benignity shine through them, and, like the gentle shapes of crimson and green in a stormless sea, the thoughts and feelings of the writer gleam forth from such a transparent medium, that you irresistibly exclaim, "Blessed man! it is long since the last gust of passion ruffled that tranquil bosom. Truly it was a great calm which was there created when to that heart of thine, with its guilty fears and human anxieties, the Incarnate Word said, 'Peace, be still,' and for ever lulled its agitations in nearness to His own. Blessed are the pure in spirit, for into all the depths of their nature the Godhead can shine." And

blessed are they, for from their spirit's tranquil surface the Godhead is reflected. When you draw near, and bend over that limpid pool, like a fairy forest you see the rhodomenias and corallines underneath, with arrowy forms darting through them; but when you retire, and from some distance look back, all these details are hidden from the view, but in the cloudless sky you see one sun, in the molten silver mirror spread below you perceive another. So when from close contact with John's Gospel and Epistles, and from near inspection of the charming thoughts and wonderful truths there disclosed, you draw off a little space, and try to look at the writer, you are conscious of something clearer than mere candour—something brighter than mere earthly beauty. And so it is. Christ is revealed in the narrative; He is reflected from the mind of the writer.—"With that loving gaze fixed upwards upon the Light of Life, his own eye has become light; the sun has made it sunlike." *

Ingenuousness and intuition are near allied:

* "Christ the Light of the World," by Rudolph Besser.

the pure heart, the open eye. From the time that the Baptist exclaimed,—"Behold the Lamb of God," it would seem as if John had no longer toiled at that task which some of us find so troublesome—the task of taking away our own sins—but had rested in sweet security, satisfied with a Divine Redeemer and Reconciler, and at leisure to observe those gracious words and wonderful works which showed so plainly the Father.

One of the greatest gifts we can ask from God is this open eye, and the open heart its correlate. We say to John, 'Beloved disciple, do tell us the secret of your happiness;' and he hands us an epistle in which it is all written down. "These things we write, that your joy may be full. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin. If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life." Or he hands us a Gospel with the conversations and prayers of his Master carefully recorded, and subjoins, "These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus

is the Christ, the Son of God; and that, believing, ye might have life through his name." In other words, light shines from the Lord Jesus sufficient to show that He is the Son of God, the Saviour. If you will only look, that light will so shine into your heart as to chase away your gloom and cheer you into hope and love, and like-mindedness. The light of God, as it shines in Jesus, will be life to your soul. In other words, heaven's grand gratuity—God's greatest gift—the best in itself, and in its bestowment the most free and ungrudging,—is salvation or a Saviour. Of presents the purest, of benefactions the freest and most God-like, is life eternal. This life is conveyed in the person of the Saviour; if you have the Son of God, you already have life; if you now accept Him, He is yours, and yours also are the life and the Divine sonship which He confers on as many as receive Him.* 'The things which we have seen and heard we write unto you, that you may have fellowship with us; that you may see them as we saw them, and hear them as we

* John xx. 31; i. 4, 12; 1 John i. 4, 7; ii. 1; v. 11, 12.

heard them; and so have the same communion with the Father, and the same fulness of joy.'

We ourselves love to be understood, and we like to have our good offices accepted, our kind intentions appreciated. This was one reason why his Master so delighted in John. He knew that He was understood, and, even where insight might for the moment be baffled, He could count on his adoring acquiescence. The manifestation might be miraculous, and the disciple might be deeply conscious of his own depravity, but John would not cry, "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man;" and the act might be painfully condescending; but still, if his Master was pleased to stoop to a menial office, John would not in rash humility exclaim, "Never! Lord, thou shalt never wash my feet." Nor would it be needful on the last day of intercourse to say to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet have you not known me?"

That limpid eye, that loving heart, are a joy to the Lord Jesus wherever He sees them. May He see them in you! As a good and

perfect gift, may the Holy Spirit confer on you the art of seeing and the art of receiving!

"Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush a-fire with God;
But only he who sees takes off his shoes." *

So this morning there stood a figure on the shore; but although sea-eyes are sharp, the eye of love is still sharper; and where the others were only conscious of some ordinary Galilean, the disciple whom Jesus loved came out with the truth, "It is the Lord." And so, in that Gospel and in those Epistles where others see only texts and Scripture proofs—answers to Gnosticism, and confutations of Popery—do you learn to see the Incarnate Mystery, the mind and manner of that Saviour with whom your present relations should be so immediate and intimate, and without whose society and sympathy eternity itself is but outer darkness. And whilst with John you learn in Jesus to see what God shows you, learn to accept what in Jesus God gives you,—the cleansing from all

* Aurora Leigh.

sin, the life eternal, fellowship with the Father; for in Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and the thing which made John so blessed was, that out of this fulness he had learned to receive, even grace for grace. It is not for Himself, nor for those who are righteous already, that Christ is the Fountain opened, the Lamb of God, the Bread of Life, the Light of the World; but, with a mean and mistaken humility, we won't accept the *gift* of God till we have prepaid it with a penny in the pound. The Sun of Righteousness is shining, but we keep the shutters closed, and rub our eyes, declaring that there was never known such dismal weather. All around our tent lies the manna shower, but, instead of gathering a fresh supply, we take down some ancient pipkin, and, setting it on to simmer for the fiftieth time, lament the scanty grains and musty flavour. We sing, "I lay my sins on Jesus," and insist on carrying them ourselves. Christ comes and offers to cleanse us from all unrighteousness—from this day's trespasses, as well as from the sin of all our history—but we do not understand how His word abiding

in us makes us clean every whit, and imagine that it is by washing ourselves, rather than by suffering Him to wash us, that we are to obtain a "part" in Him.* Oh, how happy we might be if, like John the Divine, as regards the greatest of sights, we could be content for a time to be simply *seers;* and, as regards the greatest of gifts, we could bring ourselves to be neither petitioners nor purchasers, but simply *receivers!* How rich we should be if thus we took all that God actually gives! and what a loveliness might at last be our own if the soul would learn to turn round where God points, and so live and die looking unto Jesus!

Open, receptive, unpreoccupied, John's was that attitude of mind which, at the disclosure of Incarnate Deity rejoicing with exceeding joy, was prepared to sustain without stumbling the unveiling of an awful as well as glorious future. To the aërial voyager, who soars above it, the lightning is not terrible; and to one who has seen the great white throne, with the justice and judgment which form its habitation, there is nothing

* John xiii. 8.

ominous or sinister in the clouds which go before it, and which, after all, are but dark vapours exhaled from our earth. And so in that "revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto Him," there are things hard to be understood, and bitter when realized;* but a devout and lowly spirit will not stagger at threatenings any more than at promises, and amidst the clashings and conflicts, the woes and the wailings, of a turbulent future, will rejoice because the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

"He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God." Such is an aphorism of the celestial philosophy taught by John the Divine. On that night so much to be remembered, and at that Last Supper, it was John's distinction to occupy the place next to the Master, and in reverential pensive tenderness, he drooped his head on that bosom which was soon to be pierced by the Roman spear. Nor did the Friend who sticketh closer than a brother resent the act so expressive of grateful, confiding affection, but left it on the record to show that, like Joseph and his Benjamin, the

* Rev. x. 9.

Lord Jesus is glad when disciples draw nigh; and the disciple thus favoured records it to show that, with the condescension and kindness which He beareth to His own, the Saviour loved them to the end. There were sad thoughts in that bosom, and sorrow verging on death; but there was room also for the lowly ones around Him—room for their love, room for their sorrow.

The Saviour disappeared, but the affection remained. The Saviour disappeared, and the apostle ceased to have any certain dwelling-place, save the unchanging affection of his Lord. Bethsaida was no longer his home, nor Jerusalem, nor Ephesus; his true home now was the constant, ever-enclosing presence of the unseen Saviour. Most delightful of dwellings,—he carried it with him to the surf-sprinkled isle, as well as over the balmy hills of his native Galilee. There he found sweet asylum amid the idol fanes of Pergamos, and there he found a loftier fellowship than was offered in all the lordly palaces of Ephesus and Smyrna. In that "moving tent," through all the pollutions of Sardis he passed with raiment undefiled, and in the blessed fellow-

ship there enjoyed he hardly needed Philadelphian stedfastness to bear his spirit up—he hardly felt the blighting wind which had desolated Laodicea's fragrant bowers. For he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God dwelleth in him.

That spirit of contemplation, at once lofty and loving, is somewhat alien from our western mind. With our cold temperament and scholastic turn, we are fond of definitions, we like to argue; we are not given to long affectionate pondering of some one engaging theme. To muse and meditate is not so much our way, as clever work and quick conclusions. Akin to this, we are not rich in feeling. We are judicious; we are sensible. We pride ourselves on being practical; but there is "no nonsense" in us—no idealism, no self-devotement, no fervour. We parade our logic; but to love we are ashamed. Nevertheless, in every age there tower up amongst us exceptional and noble natures, like Tabor from the plain of Jezreel, leaving the flat corn-fields far below, and with transfigurations on their summit—natures like that mountain apart which, dwelling alone, are much in heaven;

on whose elevations the last sunset lingers, and from whose sequestered slopes it seems as if the bow of promise loved to spring; men like those Teutonic mystics of the middle age whom A'Kempis represents in his "Imitation of Christ;" men like Howe and Leighton amongst ourselves—Howe, with a spiritual optimism, sustained on the equal wings of far-ranging intellect and enraptured devotion,—Leighton perpetually declaring, "There is a noble guest within us; let all our business be to entertain Him honourably, and to live in celestial love within:" and devotees in France, like Fenelon and Madame Guion, of whom the latter has expressed so well the master-thought of this peculiar piety.

"All scenes alike engaging prove
To souls impressed with sacred love;
Where'er they dwell, they dwell in Thee—
In heaven, in earth, or on the sea.

"To me remains nor place nor time,
My country is in every clime;
I can be calm and free from care
On any shore, since God is there.

"Could I be cast where Thou art not,
That were indeed a dreadful lot;
But regions none remote I call,
Secure of finding God in all." *

Of the two types of piety, the active and contemplative, Peter and John may be taken as patterns; and, as both conformations exist in society, it is a cause of rejoicing that there is room for both in the Church of Christ. The side of John is that on which few of us are likely to exceed. We are more ready to work than to worship—more anxious to hear some new thing than to realize the all-important things with which we are already familiar. In the dust of our own bustle we veil the heaven, and we run so fast we cannot read. It is God's goodness, therefore, that He gives us leisure. He gives us days when it is impiety not to pause and ponder—birth-days, New Year's days, sacramental seasons, Sabbaths. And, if need be, He will find for us a Patmos—service in a family where there is no religion, a sick-room, a dwelling isolated and darkened by some mournful dispensation,

* See Note F.

where we shall be very thankful if we hear a voice behind us, "I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last"—where it will be a profitable seclusion, a blessed banishment, if we are led to a more intimate communion with that Saviour who, oft-forgotten, is never far away.

JOHN THE DIVINE.

"This is the disciple who wrote these things."

By the Cross of Jesus there were standing "His mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own house." And so the beloved disciple became the Saviour's trustee. In ministering to her through whose soul a sword had now pierced, but who, as long as she survived, must have been unspeakably endeared to discipleship as Mary the Lord's mother, he found at once a labour of love and a touching memento of his Master's confidence.

But this sacred charge was not the only purpose for which John tarried. He had his share in preaching the first Gospel and organizing the primitive Church; and it is interesting to find that one of his earliest missions was to the Samaritans, and that he went to impart to them the same gifts which were already enjoyed by believers at Jerusalem;* showing how his views had expanded and his temper had softened since the day when, rather than invoke on such separatists the descent of the Spirit, he would have called for fire from heaven, and showing, too, how Samaria was changed now that many of its villagers had received into their houses that Saviour whom a little while ago they had driven from their doors.† For many years he tarried at Jerusalem;‡ and it would seem as if it had been late in life before he commenced those labours which have identified his name with Ephesus and the Asiatic Churches. Christ's ascension he must have survived for nearly seventy years. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, who received the crown of martyrdom A.D. 167,

* Acts viii. 14—17. † Luke ix. 51—56.
‡ Acts xv. 6.

was John's disciple. Two other links of equal length would have joined the birth of Christ to the reign of Constantine.

This suggests another end which was doubtless accomplished by his long continuance. There is a living impress or likeness of themselves which the master spirits stamp, partly on the surrounding society, and still more strikingly on individual adherents or devotees, and which, to a certain extent, secures the repetition of their virtues. But if this be true in the case of mere human excellence—if in Elisha there survive traits of Elijah—if in Joshua you detect features of Moses reappearing—how much more likely was this transmission to obtain in the case of Christ and His disciples! Where the die was not only faultless but Divine, and where the receiving surface was such an amalgam of personal attachment and reverential adoration, and where the arm of the Lord was the power—where, soul to soul, His Spirit gave the pressure—can we doubt that on every one would survive an image and superscription at once carrying back the beholder to Jesus of Nazareth? But amongst these disciples who

is there that does not feel as if, in its more delicate details, as well as in its pervasive spirit, Christ's character had been especially revealed to that disciple whom He loved—whose open eye could take in the entire manifestation—whose sanctified affinity could so completely take it on? As in water face answereth to face, so we feel that to the thoughts of Jesus answers the silent walk of John, and that those who had never seen the Divine Original saw in him the most life-like copy. Far more precious than any picture or any relic—far more helpful to that early Church than Veronica's miraculous portrait, or the King of Edessa's fabled holograph, was the living epistle in which Christ had registered so many of His deepest thoughts and fondest desires—the living likeness which had looked at the express image of the Father so long as to carry away His very mind and manner. Hence we presume it comes to pass that in all our notions of the highest sanctity, we find commingled more or less some image of St. John. Paul is the hero, and Apollos is the orator, and Stephen is the martyr; but with all earthliness sublimed away and super-

seded by elements from another world, our associations with John are those of purest saintliness. The planet which beams down on us from the noon of night, does not necessarily suggest the centre of our system : in that remoteness from the source of light you might almost fancy it a separate star which had kindled its own lamp of silver or of ruby; but the worlds which circle closest to the centre you seldom see, except in a sky still luminous with the orb of day, and in which they float, not so much a contrast to the darkness, as a concentration of the lingering radiance. Like Mercury or the evening star, John is a planet near the sun. In a horizon from which the Light of the World has not long disappeared, he emits a ray so soft and heavenly that you cannot mistake its source, and you are glad to think that the Sun of Righteousness, gone down from our hemisphere, is still looked upon by him.

And John tarried to add some of its most precious portions to the Bible—to the Evangelists the closing Gospel—to the Canon the closing Book.

The Word of God is a magnificent domain,

vast in its extent, and with features boundlessly diversified. Like an outer park or forest, the Old Testament histories offer endless scope to the explorer; whilst there is invigoration in the exercise, there is a rich reward in the curious and instructive discoveries awaiting diligent research, and, as showing the Hand most high which guides our human destinies, they furnish the true introduction to universal history. Starting up here and there like rugged cliffs, the genealogies claim more than a sterile grandeur; for bleak and barren though they seem, there is a wellspring at their foot. It is from these dreary crags that the fountain of Christ's manhood takes its rise; and as you follow the stream from Ur of the Chaldees to the manger of Bethlehem, you find how faithful was the Promiser and how watchful the Providence which through all the eventful centuries kept afloat and guided on the ark of the Advent. Fulfilled and unfulfilled, the prophecies are mountains and valleys,—mountains from whose gilded summits you may look on vistas through the fog, —straths of sunshine in the vapour-flood, where glorious things and gladsome stand re-

vealed, whilst, from the echoing sides of ravines still dark and misty, comes up the heavy footfall or terrific cry of sorrows not seen as yet. The Psalms, the Canticles, the poetic books, are the singing groves, the tinkling rills, the pastures green. Rich in doctrine, laden with the finest of the wheat, the Epistles are the fruitful fields which fill the Church's granary. The Gospels are the garden inclosed, with its blossomed mounts and blazing parterres, and every several path leading up to that Tree of Life in the midst of the garden, conspicuous from every corner. But, as when a house is built on a garden's edge, the inmates are best acquainted with the rose-bush at the door, and the flower-plat next the window; as, when Spring invites them forth, it is there that the children play; as it is at these they look when drizzling days have kept them prisoners; and as it is amongst these sweet plants of the threshold that the chair is planted for the wasted invalid when carried out for a last look of earthly summer; so it would seem as if the new nature's home stood somewhere on the verge of John's Gospel. For though believers

may be found expatiating through the whole field of Scripture—some resting under Abraham's oak, and some in Jeremiah's bower of weeping cypress, pensively musing; some with Moses on the mount, and some with Elijah in the desert; some rubbing the ears of corn in the doctrinal Epistles, and some stringing the pearls thickly strewn on the strand of the Proverbs;—yet, when the sky lowers, or evening shadows fall, as if homewards, the general movement is Gospel-wards, and, of all Gospels, towards the record of St. John. Near home it must be. The children of the house are familiar with it. Here babes in knowledge may wander at their will; here the dim eye is conscious of the landmarks, and does not lose its way. As on the lawn before the family residence, the last-born youngest child of grace may safely disport him here; and here, leaning on his staff for very age, the old disciple feels that he is breathing native air. Yes, it is near home; so full of Jesus, that you can get no nearer unless you were actually going in—in where John himself now is—into the "prepared place" where Christ's own presence makes it home.

And his Epistles,—the first, especially,—the essence of his Gospel—the golden fruit from that fragrant, silvery flower. "The Word—God heard: the Light—God seen: the Life—God felt: in one word, Jesus Christ God manifest,"* such is the purport of his Gospel, and such is an epitome of his Epistle. The lesson throughout is, "That the means of union with God are, on the part of Christ, His atoning blood (i. 7; ii. 2; iii. 5; iv. 10, 14; v. 6) and advocacy (ii. 1); on the part of man, holiness (i. 6), obedience (ii. 3), purity (iii. 3), faith (iii. 23; iv. 3; v. 5), and, above all, love (ii. 7; iii. 14; iv. 7; v. 1):"†—a God of infinite compassion coming forth to meet His guilty, prodigal children, and they falling into the arms of His mercy to receive the words of forgiveness, and be enfolded for ever in the embrace of His fatherliness. God is love, and you need not fear to love Him. Such is the message, and in the announcement there is a theme for life-long meditation. A happy valley, a holy land, is the Gospel revelation. We want to soar, we even like to

* Charles Wolfe.

† Meyrick, in Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible."

dive; and, in the world of thought, there are abysses and there are mountain heights. For the divers there is the origin of evil; for the climbers and aëronauts there are the *à priori* argument, the plurality of worlds, the mode of future existence. The divers have gone very deep. With a dredge of 1,260 fathoms they have brought up something—not exactly "the dragon of the sea," the mighty mystery for which Leibnitz and other bold fishers angled, but only as yet some poor little worms and star-fishes.* And the aërial voyagers have risen very high; but, except that they grew comatose, and felt it fearfully cold, they have not much to report: though far above

* The deepest sounding at which life has been found is Dr. Wallich's. From a depth of 1,260 fathoms he brought up living star-fishes, and with the tubes of annelids apparently recent in their digestive cavity. Mr. Glaisher's great ascent was to an elevation of nearly seven perpendicular miles. It seems hardly needful to say how much we admire the heroic feats of the latter, and appreciate the remarkable results obtained by the former. It is in the realm of metaphysical theology, or "wisdom above that which is written," that both the dredge and the balloon have as yet made small addition to our knowledge.

the earth, they were still inside its atmosphere; and, do what they could, none of these transcendentalists and ethereal aspirants have been able to bring back any absolute result, or get for an instant above "the conditioned." Within sight of those snowy peaks and tempting *aiguilles*,—within sight of that melancholy main and its unfathomed mystery,—God has planted His garden—has fenced in His own revelation. And although some of us can hardly help dealing in matters too high for us, or too deep, how can we be thankful enough for knowledge of God's own giving! Let us mock no intellectual effort. Let us disparage no man who adds a fact, however small, or even a final negation, to the realm of science. But let us be thankful that, for spiritual requirements, there is small need of mere intellectual effort. It was not on a peak, splendid with virgin snow, and till then untouched by human foot, that Jesus was transfigured, but on a hill green to the summit, and which could be scaled with no great effort; nor was it from the top of even Olivet, but a little distance up the side, that He ascended to heaven. And that

epistle of John has no high-sounding words; but it has truths which, if they were abiding in us, would make us immortal—truths which, coming forth from God, can lead us back to Him again. In its balmy clime the Alpine traveller may be glad to rest his weary limbs, and heal his broken bones; and on its bread from heaven the deep-sea dredger may be thankful to feast who has been long dropping his sounding-line into deep problems and dark mysteries, and who has "grown old in drawing nothing up."

God is Love. This single announcement of the beloved disciple, contradicted by so many appearances, yet carrying its own evidence; in the world around us met by many a no and many a murmur, and from the caverns of despair fetching up a fiendish laughter, and yet countersigned by every fragment of Jehovah's handwriting on the ruined tablets of the heart, and in trumpet-tones reverberated from the hills of immortality—this shortest of sentences and most summary of gospels, which a breath can utter, and which a signet-ring can contain, is the truth which, shining bright in the Advent,

will overspread the world in the millennium's mild lustre—the truth on which no man has mused too much, even although he has pondered it all his days, and to which no anthem can do justice except that in which golden harps mingle, and in which the redeemed from among men are helped by the seraphim.

What is this, however, which comes after? In some respects the sublimest book of the Bible, but, withal, the darkest and most difficult. With its plagues and its earthquakes, with its woes and its vials, in startling contrast to the bland glories of the Gospel and Epistles, the Apocalypse shows that it was not without reason that its author was named beforehand a "son of thunder."

> "And yet as every cloud that spreads above,
> And veileth love, itself is love,"

so also the storm which breaks up atmospheric stagnation—the lightning by which lurid vapours are scattered and the firmament once more is cleared, is aught but a malignant visitant; and, distressing as it may be to read of battles where the blood comes up to the horses' bridles, and plagues in which a third portion of the species perish, we must not forget that

all this is the adjustment of a wise and holy benevolence, banishing evil to its own place, and securing for righteousness an uninterrupted and universal reign. Nor, perhaps, has any book done more to keep the Church heroic and high-hearted. Expanding the Saviour's warning,—"In the world ye shall have tribulation, in Me ye shall have peace," it has been a continual comforter in persecution; and, whilst its martyrs, crying, "Lord, how long?" have helped to uphold the patience of the saints, the indestructibility of truth and the eventual efficacy of every good confession have been taught by the resurrection of the witnesses. To every phase of waning zeal, of decaying faith, of incipient error, of careless conduct, the messages to the seven Churches have administered antidotes, correctives, stimulants; and, whilst to the banished Hebrew this book has given a better home in the New Jerusalem, and to the Christian's heaven has imparted an aspect at once life-like and lovely, let us not forget the majesty with which it has invested a glorified Redeemer, presenting Him to olden affection with stars in His right hand and burning feet and a voice like many waters and a

face too bright to look upon. Nor rate it lightly that, through the congenial mind of John—a mind which must have been artistic—there have got into the mind of Christendom a strain of lofty music and a style of matchless imagery : for where is the picture-gallery that can do justice to the Pale Horse and his Rider ?—to the Angel in the Sun ?—to the Sea of Glass and Fire commingled, with the harping victors standing on it ?—to the Great White Throne, and from the face of the descending Judge fleeing away both earth and heaven ? What pencil can do justice to the Tree of Life, viewing its twelve manner of fruits reflected in the crystal river ;—or who can paint the pearly gates and the jasper walls, and that glory of God which is at once the sun and the sanctuary, the light and the temple of the sinless city ? Or where is the choir which can give us a notion of the ten thousand times ten thousand singing with loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" ?

Till the Church required, or was ready

to receive such books, John tarried; and then, hearing his prayer, "Even so, come Lord Jesus," the Master came. The task was done, and the faithful servant was released.

John tarried long. If he had foreseen that there should elapse near seventy years before he rejoined his Saviour, it would have seemed a fearful interval. And, no doubt, at times he must have wearied, and cried very wistfully, "Come, Lord Jesus." But it is over now, and,

> "When the shore is won at last,
> Who will count the billows past?" *

On the whole, however, it must have been a happy life: for whether it be in this world or any other, "he that dwelleth in love," cannot live too long; where the devout and benevolent affections are in active exercise, existence can bring no tedium. As Mrs. Schimmelpenninck exclaimed, when told of a Christian who led a dejected life, "A Christian, and not happy! I am now sixty-eight; I am far happier than I was at twenty, and that principally because the Lord has shown

* Keble.

me more of Himself." Then, after a pause, she added, "Not that I should speak of happiness when I think of my melancholic temperament, and the deserts I often have to pass through; but even the sound of the living water, to the traveller in the wastes of Africa, is less sweet than the love of God to my soul."* In the same spirit, at the age of seventy-four, we find another wise and cheerful believer writing, "Goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life. My trials have been few compared with my comforts. My pleasures have been cheap and simple, and therefore very numerous. I have enjoyed without satiety the seasons and the sceneries of nature. I have relished the bounties of Providence, using them with moderation and thankfulness. I have delighted in the means of grace; unutterable have been my delights in studying and perusing the Scripture. How have I verified the words of Young, 'Retire, and read thy Bible to be gay.'"† All are not equally favoured. With some it has been

* "Life of Mary Anne Schimmelpenninck," third edition, p. 468.

† "Autobiography of the Rev. W. Jay," p. 158.

a bleak spring and a rainy summer. Yet wherever there is true religion there will be the cordial acknowledgment that the purest, sweetest joys are those which flow from God's friendship, and which are found at a throne of grace. And whether it be in words express, or in the language of tranquil looks, and a calm and kindly walk, it is a blessed thing to be able to publish God's praise, and tell the generation following, 'This God can supply all your need: He can keep you safe, and make you happy.'

FOLLOW ME.

"And when he had thus spoken, he saith unto Him Follow me."

As understood by Simon, and as designed by his Master, this was a summons to martyrdom; and to his subsequent career it may well have imparted a solemn self-devoted sensation. The baptism with which his Lord had been baptized now awaited himself, and he could not hope to get out of the world by any of the more easy exits. For him there was no euthanasia, no gentle falling on sleep, but others would gird him, and carry him whither he would not, even to that terrible cross. And like one who had sentence of death in himself, what henceforward was the worth of anything earthly? The house at Capernaum no home, the boat no property, his wife a prospective widow: no one to live for now

but Christ, nothing now to do except to feed the sheep and follow Jesus.

So was it with myriads of the early Christians, and so from age to age has it been with entire communities. Thus has faith been fostered, and a lofty life been led by men who made it their motto, "None but Christ," and who in modern society have left the noblest elements it possesses.

But, prepared as every Christian should be to follow Christ to prison and to death, it would be aside from the purpose to speak as if this were the case in modern England, or as if, in saying to ourselves, "Follow me," the Lord Jesus were calling us to spend years in the dungeon, or to close life on the scaffold.

No, my friends; He calls us to walk in His steps, and copy His pattern. He bids us keep close to Himself, and, as nearly as the altered conditions permit, He invites us to repeat His career. In a sense very intelligible, He says, "If any man will be my disciple, let him take up his cross, and deny himself, and come after me."

And surely it is a delightful thought, that one such life has been led in this world of

ours. To some of us it would be a new sensation, when evening closed, to look back on a single day rightly spent—nothing omitted, nothing blundered, nothing wrong in thought, nothing rashly spoken. But here is One who lived, not separate from His brethren, but separate from sin, and who could look back, not on a single day, but an entire existence exempt from all evil, and who to God presented day by day, on behalf of His people, an unsullied oblation, a spotless sanctity, a perfect obedience. It is delightful and amazing to think that with materials such as are placed at our own disposal, in a climate not the most bracing, in a body by no means proof against pain or defiant of fatigue, in a society not the most moral or devout, going about from place to place with companions who had no inspiration to contribute, and usually sojourning where there was no seclusion and little sympathy, there should have been led a life so perfect, that at its close there was nothing to regret, and if it had been repeated there was nothing to improve. And surely it makes the Christian's career the highest of vocations that he is called to be

Christ's follower, and that he has it set to him as his problem to live a life the likest possible in this our present time.

You understand? You are not called to live an Oriental life under northern skies, or a patriarchal life in modern Europe, any more than an angel life in the midst of men. You are not asked to speak Hebrew, either original or translated, nor are you bidden wear any peculiar garb, or affect any singular appearance; but you are invited to study that great History which supplies the perfect and universal pattern, and here in London, under our murky firmament, with neighbours quite ordinary, some of them not religious, and many not at all romantic, you are asked to come a little nearer Christ, and as a result of that you are promised, "If any man follow me, he shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." You are encouraged to hope for an existence richer and larger and more truly illustrious than any known amongst the sons of men, a life radiant with God's own light and exuberant with conscious immortality.

Follow Christ, and you shall never be far

from the Father. That pleasant countenance with which the Father beheld the well-beloved Son extends to all His followers—to all who in faith and affection gather round Him or go after Him, like this little band beside the Lake of Galilee.

Follow Christ, and you will learn to do things as He did them. You will learn to feed the sheep or the lambs as He fed them—warning, reproving, exhorting, with a kindred long-suffering. You will learn to be calm amidst astounding insult; and, what is harder still, you will learn to be kind to most unattractive misery. You will learn to be meek and lowly—magnanimous towards the injurious—accessible to ignorance, to conscious guilt, and poverty. You will learn to meet temptation with "Thus it is written;" and for trial you will learn to prepare by praying more earnestly.

Follow Christ, and He will conduct you where no other can take you. I do not mean merely in that better life beyond to which He is the only entrance; but in this present world there are heights of attainment and regions of joy which are only reached in

His company. All know something of the spell exerted by a master spirit—as when to Beza's learning and liveliness Calvin added force and firmness, and as when Melancthon's mild convictions were, under God, by his energetic colleague quickened up into evangelistic fervour. So, infinitely rather, when the Master is Christ and the moulding power the Holy Spirit. Both Peter and John loved Christ. It would be hard to say which loved Him most, but it is safe to say, that but for that love they would never have stood out from the mass of their undistinguished cotemporaries; they would have gone down to nameless graves with neighbour Galileans. But Jesus called them to Himself, and they rose and left all, and followed Him; and whilst in the mind and temperament of each He left all that was fundamental, Peter's warm rapidity was mellowed by the higher wisdom, John's silent intuition found an object in the incarnate Word, and an utterance amidst the Asiatic Churches. And although that following of the Master led the one to Herod's prison and the other to an isle called Patmos, He who sent His angel to

the one and came Himself to the other, so transfigured the spot, that alongside of his captive the Emperor was poorly lodged, and the guilty Herod was greatly to be pitied ;— for that dungeon was draped in the light inaccessible, and to that ocean rock came a Visitant, with a voice like the cataract sounding, who said to the exile, " Fear not, I am the First and the Last." And so, if you are rightly aspiring, you will not rejoice because your name is written on earth; you will seek to have it known in heaven. You will seek to have it engraved on the breastplate—the heart of the great High Priest; and, as in loving communion and growing like-mindedness you keep on to follow Him, He will raise you above paltry ambition—above the sordid tastes and sinful ways of the world around you—above the evil habits and unholy passions which at present most deeply distress you. As you follow on you will come to know Him better and trust Him more, and admitted to a commurion of which the world knows nothing, you will at last find yourself looking down on earthly cares and solicitudes, on tumults of the people and

national commotions, from heights such as the mere sage or statesman never scaled; and it will not be "a voice like a falling star," but the vision of a rising one, which proclaims your promotion—gone to shine in the firmament for ever and ever.

Finally, if you keep on to follow Christ, He will take you up where all others leave you. One by one the companions of the pilgrimage drop off and disappear. If you are young, father and mother will forsake you; if you are older, the friends and fellow-travellers who cheer the road will always be changing, and some of the most valued will pass on before. And at last that mysterious limit will be reached where the rest can come no farther; and as one by one the senses close—as in the thick fog dear faces fade away, and as far down the strand fond and familiar voices cease to overtake you, a countenance that you have never seen before, and which yet you know full well, will say, as plainly as the Supreme of Loveliness can say, "It is I: be not afraid;" and so with gladness and rejoicing shall you be brought into the palace of the King, and there you shall abide.

Do you then, dear friends, who are still leading lives unreal, unworthy, unhappy, come to Christ; and you who profess to be disciples, follow the Master. Follow with your eye fixed on His pattern, and with a prayer ascending for the strengthening aids of His Spirit. Follow Him as you go out to teach your class this afternoon, or as you gather your children round you to tell them of His love. Follow Him as you sit in the sick-room of your friend the long night or the lonely day, or as to your own lips you raise the cup of weariness and pain. Follow Him as you go forth to the task of the morrow, and do with might the work He assigns; and follow Him as with pleasant looks or a helping hand you cheer a comrade struggling through His toil. And if thus you follow, the Forerunner will never be far away. His right hand will sustain you; and, like Mr. Standfast, if it be calm on the day of your departure, you may be able to leave like testimony: "I am now at the end of my journey; my toilsome days are over. I am going now to see that head which was crowned with thorns, and that face that was spit upon

for me. I have formerly lived by hearsay and faith; but now I go where I shall live by sight, and shall be with Him in whose company I delight. I have loved to hear Him spoken of, and wherever I have seen the print of His shoe in the earth, there have I coveted to set my foot too."

THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE FORERUNNER.

"Follow thou Me."

"FOLLOW ME," said the Lord Jesus; and hardly had Peter and John made a movement to comply, when He vanished from their sight. "Follow Me," and a few days afterwards He led them out as far as to Bethany, and whilst still in the act of blessing them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. They did not go with Him. Their "natural" bodies could not keep pace with His, now "spiritual" and glorified; and whilst His immortal form soared upward, they were not caught up with Him in the air. But although their bodies remained on earth, their affections followed. Their hearts went with Him, and the whole of life's remainder was an effort to

overtake Him. "Follow Me" was henceforward their motto, and gave consistency and meaning to all that they did. In that upper chamber where the next ten days passed in prayer, they felt that He was not far away; and at Pentecost, in the outpouring of the Spirit, they found Him in their midst once more. It was in His name and in communion with Him that they preached their wonderful sermons, and said to the lame and paralytic, "Arise." It was as followers of Jesus that they calmly encountered frantic mobs and angry rulers; and not less cheerfully than they went to the prison made bright by His presence, did they carry the cross endeared by His pattern. Above all, when their lives came out so unprecedented and unique—in disinterestedness and self devotement, in elevation and beneficence, not only in advance of all others, but a new thing in the earth,—men took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus. As followers of Christ they distanced the rest of mankind.

That mighty Magnet has not lost its attractive power. An unseen Saviour is still drawing many after Him. There are at this

moment lives on earth which but for the influence of Christ's example and the inspiration of Christ's Spirit would have been impossible. There are some who have taken Him for their pattern, and who, on the strength of an absorbing affection, have risen to a height of devotion and heavenly-mindedness at which we can only gaze with distant wonder; and there are others who would feel it almost presumptuous to speak of Christ as in any sense their model, on whom His Spirit has so wrought that it has made them very different from what they once were, and who in some particular or other have so learned the mind which was in Christ, that on the strength of that single feature they are paragons of some special grace or virtue.

One day, thinking to amuse him, his wife read to Dr. Judson some newspaper notices, in which he was compared to one or other of the apostles. He was exceedingly distressed, and then he added, "Nor do I want to be like them. I do not want to be like Paul, nor Apollos, nor Cephas, nor anv mere man. I want to be like Christ. We have only one perfectly safe Exemplar — only One who,

tempted like as we are in every point, is still without sin. I want to follow Him only—copy His teachings, drink in His spirit, place my feet in His footprints, and measure their shortcomings by these, and these alone. Oh, to be more like Christ!" Such had long been his aspiration; and to a mind not naturally the most prepossessing it gave an unworldly charm, and more than mortal mastery. Panting after perfection, he strove to subdue every sinful habit and sense-ward tendency. Finding that for want of funds the Mission was languishing, he cast into the treasury his patrimonial estate. Finding that his nicety and love of neatness interfered with his labours among the filthy Karens, he sought to vanquish this repugnance by nursing those sick of most loathsome diseases. Finding that his youthful love of fame was not utterly extinguished, he threw into the fire his correspondence, including a letter of thanks he had received from the Governor-General of India, and every document which might contribute to his posthumous renown. And finding that his soul still clave unto the earth, he took

temporary leave of all his friends, and, retiring into a hut on the edge of the jungle, and subsisting on a little rice, for several weeks he gave himself entirely to communion with God. And although some may think that in all this he strove to "wind himself too high," and although, in mere ascetic abnegations, it may turn out that we are following not Jesus but John the Baptist, it must not be forgotten that low spiritual attainments or a languid faith will never raise a sunken people: if mountains are to be moved, if whole nations are to be lifted from paganism and its miry pit, the Xavier or Zinzendorf, the Brainerd or Judson, who seeks to raise them up, would need himself to dwell on high; he would need a strong arm and a firm hold on heaven.

To the evangelist we concede the foremost place amongst Christ's followers; for his work is the hardest, and, where that work is successful, the reward is the greatest. But there are many who, without any special designation, and almost unawares to themselves, have proved excellent missionaries, and gone far to carry out the mind of the supreme Philan-

thropist. Such a service was rendered, first by Granville Sharpe, and then by Clarkson and Wilberforce, when, on the fulcrum of a glorious first principle in the British Constitution working their lever, they first established the point that in England no man can be a slave, and then from the British Empire rolled off the crime of the slave-trade, and thus brought round that universal emancipation in which France and the Netherlands have so honourably joined. Such a service was rendered by Michael Thomas Sadler, when, moved with compassion, he took up the case of our factory children, and, fighting their battle in Parliament and on platforms, at last gained for them a little daily leisure, and opportunity to receive that Christian education of which, in common with the training of the Sabbath-school, we see the results in the new race of operatives, so manly and so much-enduring. Such a service has been rendered by every one who, without self-seeking, has in faith and simplicity taken up the work which God gave him to do. As by one approach you enter the valleys of Piedmont, you come on a school-house with

the gable inscribed, "Whosoever passes this way, let him bless the name of Colonel Beckwith:" and so in every village you find dearer than any other earthly name, the memory of that good soldier who, disabled at Waterloo, gave forty years to those Waldenses whom he chanced to visit, building their schools, relieving their poverty, and striving to obtain for them those civil privileges which are now nearly equal to our own. In like manner, when in any dark place of Belgium or France, you come on a light clearly shining, and trace its pedigree—when you ask the earnest preacher or colporteur whence he comes—in all likelihood you are sent back to Geneva and its Evangelical School; in other words, you find that this sacred fire was kindled at the lamp which Robert Haldane fetched from Scotland half a century since, and which now sheds from Helvetian mountains a richer light than any ever left by rosiest sunset on their peaks of snow. Thus it was that when in 1831 cholera was raging in Hamburg, and even near relatives in their terror ran away from the stricken, one weak woman, strong in God, withstood the panic, and with exquisite deli-

cacy and inexhaustible loving-kindness, ministering to the sufferers, gathered round herself such a halo of angelhood that she became the correspondent of Queens and the pride of her city, and found the only recompense she sought in instituting that Society of Deaconesses and Friends of the Poor who have done so much for Germany, and of whom we can never think except in connexion with Amelia Sieveking, as again when we think of her we are constrained to think of that Divine Sufferer who made her so rich in His tender mercy, and so beautiful in His salvation.

Every feat of philanthropy, every plan conducive to human welfare, may be traced up to the self-same origin. Sometimes through curious channels, through dark and dismal conduits, it flows from the "fountain opened in the house of David;" even although it be a monkish perversion, or a secularist plagiarism, for the origin of any kind or beneficent idea we are obliged to go back to that best of benefactors, who taught the blessedness of giving, and who, through the matchless generosity of His own self-sacrifice, and through the presence of His perpetual almoner and evangelist, the

Church, is exerting evermore a softening influence on the heart of Christendom.

You fear, however, that all this is beyond your reach. You say that you cannot hope to do anything great or originate anything novel. But it is not this that is needed. Great plans seldom come to much. The projector plants a whole pumpkin and expects a vegetable prodigy; but all the crop is a sprawling gourd, destined to perish at the first touch of winter. God plants an acorn or a little scaly carpel, and although for years the seedling is hardly visible, at last the oak or cedar can shelter a congregation beneath its canopy, and it lives for centuries. The work which you have presently in hand is great enough, if it be to protect and foster "trees of God;" and it is not so much by striking out new plans as by putting fresh life into the old ones, that you will best serve your generation and exemplify the power of the Gospel.

In the words of a keen observer and powerful thinker, "The pressing need of our faith is not simply faithful evangelists to proclaim its doctrines, but legions of men conse-

crating their worldly vocations, witnessing to that truth on which much scepticism prevails, that Christianity, so received as to become an integral part of a man, is omnipotent to keep him from the evil, not by taking him out of the world, but by making him victorious over it. He is a most worthy disciple of Christ who, like Palissy, or Buxton, or Budgett, or Perthes, exhibits religion as 'the right use of a man's whole self'—as the one thing which gives dignity and nobility to what is in itself sordid and earthly—as the mainspring of earnest and successful strivings after loftier ends and a purer life—as the power outside of and within man which, lifting up conduct in the individual, raises the community, and not as a state of mind mystical, and in active life unattainable, high up among things intangible, separated from contact with work-a-day life, appropriate to Sabbath-days and special hours, to leisure, old age, and death-beds. Every man who is 'diligent in business, serving the Lord,' is a sermon brimful of the energies of life and truth, a witness to the comprehensiveness and adaptability of Christ's religion, a preacher of righteousness

in scenes where none can preach so effectively or so well." *

To this want of the age, to this "need of our faith," I trust many here will seek to contribute. I trust that there are not a few who, in answer to the question, "Lovest thou me?" cannot help saying, "Yes, we do;" and there are others who, from distrusting themselves, or misunderstanding Him, would be afraid to say so much, but in whose behalf I fondly hope that He "who knoweth all things," is pleased to say it for them. If so, the best token of attachment and loyalty is to follow Him fully. Try to give such a representation of His religion as will be true to Himself and appropriate to your own position, and then it cannot fail to be attractive and impressive to others.

Amongst those features of the great Example which all may study and seek to assimilate, let me mention first, His sublime veracity.

* "North British Review," Nov. 1862, p. 274. For an eloquent exposition of an all-embracing and all-pervading Christianity in connexion with art, literature, and mental science, see the "Essays of Peter Bayne, Esq.," and his "Christian Life in the Present Time."

"For this cause came I into the world," as He himself stated it, "that I should bear witness to the truth;" and to the truth so constant was His witness, that many would fain have sent Him out of the world again. Nor was it merely particular truths to which He testified. He was himself the Truth, the Amen, the great Reality, whom it was impossible to know too thoroughly, or trust too entirely; and, whilst from His own mouth guile never proceeded, there never was a presence in which affectations and hypocrisies felt so uncomfortable—gasping, and out of their element, and like to give up the ghost. In order to have the mind of Christ we must share His truthfulness. The temptations are terrible. Not to speak of malignant falsehoods—lies of cowardice, lies of convenience, lies of complaisance,—there are such temptations to suppress and exaggerate, to distort and to colour, to make promises in levity and to offer plausible apologies for failure, that it is no easy attainment, a perfect truthfulness. But with the lustre which it sheds, and with the solid and secure sensation which it imparts to its

possessor, it is a pearl of great price, and one of the best gifts which the transforming Spirit imparts. He alone can carry us over the initial difficulty, and by putting truth in the inward parts—by making ourselves realities, He makes it possible to speak the truth and to live it. Teaching more than a poor verbal accuracy, imparting that courage which is constitutionally honest, and curbing those evil passions, covetousness, envy, malice, which are "alway liars;" above all, by bringing the will into harmony with God and His holy law, He can put far from us the way of lying, and will enable us to follow along His shining track the Faithful and True Witness.

Again: Christ Jesus hath left us a pattern in His kindness. It is wonderful how much misery and discomfort one ill-conditioned being can diffuse—in a household a sour or sulky inmate, in a parish or county a litigious landowner, in an empire a despot like Philip the Second or Ivan the Terrible, with a craze which takes the form of cruelty. But great as is the might of Apollyon, greater is the might of the Saviour; and much as the devil has done in the way of destroying, Christ has wrought

far greater wonders in the way of restoring. Himself the Son of God incarnate, and crowning three years of the busiest beneficence by a deed of mercy, whose influence eternity cannot exhaust, and whose outgoings are felt in all worlds—one lesson of His life is the amount of consolation, and encouragement, and holy impulse, which can be diffused from a single presence in its progress through one short day, when there are no conflicting elements—when the fountain never intermits, when the light is never veiled. O, my friends, let us dwell on the loving-kindness of our Lord. Let us muse on that walk of mercy which, wherever it trod, hath left the air so balmy and the grass so green. Let us try to share His joy who found a solace which others knew not in pardoning sin and transforming sorrow. And if ours cannot often be the ecstasy of saving a soul alive, let us all the rather abound in those very needful and more numerous offices which take stumbling-blocks from the path, and thorns from the pillow, prejudices from the mind, and wounds from the spirit. Let ours be the Christ-like happiness of showing kindness; and as we try to alleviate anguish,

as we visit the house of mourning, as we deal forth bread to the hungry, we shall find it a gainful partnership to be fellow-workers with the Man of Mercies. For our own bleeding spirit, we shall find that there is no better balsam than the wine and oil which we pour into the wounds of a forlorn fellow-traveller. To lighten our own load, we shall find that the best expedient is to bear another's burden. Of all sunshine, we shall find that the most potent for dissipating our own darkness is the smile we give to others. And if any regret there be, it will be to find that no benefaction is absolutely returnless and gratuitous; for send it wheresoever we may, in some shape or other it is sure to come back into our own bosom.

Once more : follow Christ in that wonderful faculty which turned every opportunity to the best account. His immediate attendants were, most of them, crude in their views, and confused in their notions, and the hosts who invited Him, and the audiences which gathered round Him, seldom supplied inviting themes of discourse. But in any com-

pany, starting from any topic, He soon carried His hearers into that heaven from which He came, or into the presence of that Father whom He so ardently loved, and so earnestly sought to make known. And if there were like elevation in our minds, our presence would be a continual influence, evoking good and repressing evil. Profanity and ribaldry would soon sink abashed from our silence or our frown, and timid piety would soon know where to go for a comforter or counsellor. For if there be a frightful contagion in evil, there is in faith and earnestness a Divine ascendancy. One serious thinker can do much to arrest frivolity, even as one cheerful countenance can go far to brighten a gloomy company, even as one high-toned spirit can go far to raise to his own level a large assembly.

To instance in nothing else: follow Christ in His humility. "Let the mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus, who humbled himself, and made himself of no reputation." Learn of Him, for He is meek and lowly. Although the meekness of the believer cannot

be quite the same as the humility of the self-emptying Saviour, in some things they agree. Whether it be in Christ or the Christian, there is in true humility nothing abject, nothing self-disparaging; on the other hand, there is affability, there is self-forgetfulness, there is contentment, there is submission to God's will, there is cheerful, unquestioning obedience. And this meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price.

"Through the strait gate of life she passes, stooping,
With sandals on her feet;
And pure-eyed graces, with linked palms, come trooping,
Their sister fair to greet.

"The angels bend their eyes upon her goings,
And guard her from annoy;
Heaven fills her quiet heart with overflowings
Of calm celestial joy.

"The Saviour loves her, for she wears the vesture
With which He walked on earth;
And through her child-like glance, and step, and gesture,
He knows her heavenly birth.

"The white-robed saints, the Throne-steps singing under,
Their state all meekly wear;
Their pauseless praise wells up from hearts which wonder
That ever they came there." *

* "Vision of Prophecy," &c., by J. D. Burns, p. 256.

NOTES.

NOTE A, p. 6.

"None of the disciples durst ask Him, Who art thou?"

"In order to give them a farther proof that He was a real man and no phantom, although they had already seen His body with their eyes, and heard it with their ears, and touched it with their hands, He now chose to join them in taking food. Accordingly He invited them to a prepared repast [and bade them add fishes which they themselves had caught]. The disciples took their places, but they were silent; for the immortal majesty of His form deprived them of their wonted confidence. Still, the more glorious appearance notwithstanding, they recognised their Master."—*Erasmi Paraphrasis.* In this we fancy that Erasmus is nearer the mark than Calvin, who explains—"The disciples dared not to ask Christ; that is, they were afraid of doing Him wrong: so clear and conspicuous were the signs by which He had revealed Himself." The evangelist plainly indicates that, on the one hand, there was no need to ask,

"Who art thou?" for His identity was obvious: already, and before the conversation with Peter began, they "knew that it was the Lord;" but, on the other hand, if they had felt the same freedom and familiarity as in days of old, they might have satisfied their curiosity by asking many questions. As it was, awed and overpowered by His majesty, they did not venture to ask so much as "Who art thou?" but sate down to "dine" in happy and reverential silence.

"I take these words to imply that they sat down to the meal in silence, wondering at, while at the same time they well knew, Him who was their Host."—*Alford's Greek Testament.*

NOTE B, p. 7.

"FEED MY LAMBS."

"The main object of the Lord in His rejoinder, 'Feed my sheep, feed my lambs,' is not to say, 'Show then thy love in act,' but rather, 'I restore to thee thy apostolic function; this grace is thine, that thou shalt yet be a chief shepherd of my flock.' It implies, therefore, the fullest forgiveness of the past, since none but the forgiven could rightly declare the forgiveness of God." — *Trench on the Miracles*, 5th edit., p. 465. "That the Lord, looking at the commencement and first state of His flock, should *first* commit His tender lambs to be cared for, is very natural. They still are liable to fall, like Peter; and need first to be fed with love by him whom love had cared for

and lifted up. He who had so much reason to humble himself, should even on that account condescend to the little ones and the feeble; this is obviously the first point of connection."—*Stier's* "*Words of the Lord Jesus,*" vol. viii., p. 243.

NOTE C, p. 7.

The Thrice-repeated Question.

"O Apostle, be not grieved! Answer once, answer again, answer the third time. Now that you love, let the good confession gain a threefold triumph, even as presumption was thrice vanquished through fear. That which was three times 'bound,' should be three times 'loosed.' Let love untie what timidity bound."—*Augustini Sermones*, ccxcv. 4. Not less to the purpose is the annotation of Grotius:—"Wonderful is the wisdom of Christ, who in these few words contrives that Peter shall render satisfaction both to Himself, whom he had thrice denied, and to those colleagues to whom he had preferred himself: showing how the Church should exercise its discipline (exemplum dans disciplinæ ecclesiasticæ)." "With the threefold denial corresponds the triple hammer-stroke of this question on the heart of Peter."—*Tholuck on John*, p. 424. And with characteristic sagacity it is remarked by the elder Dr. M'Crie: "The question was, in itself, highly appropriate, and calculated to draw forth various emotions besides that of grief. We might have supposed that it would have been, 'Art thou sorry for having denied me?'—but it was pro-

posed by Him who knows how to touch the chord which makes the whole soul to vibrate: 'Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?' Had Peter been irritated or displeased by this close examination, he would either have repeated his former offence, and broken for ever with his Master, or he would have preserved a sullen silence, or he would have given (as we say) a short answer. But he replies as before, only with somewhat more fervour and earnestness. His grief, instead of preventing, prompted him to this further profession. He was anxious to remove every shadow of suspicion, and his generous breast would have burst had he not relieved it by avouching attachment, for the third time, to Him whom he had thrice denied."—*Works of T. M'Crie, D.D.*, vol. iv., p. 321.

Perhaps it is well to mention that in the original there is a variation of phraseology which our translation does not indicate. If we may accept Tregelles's reading προβάτιά in verse 17, the dialogue would be somewhat to this effect, as far as we can distinguish the force of ἀγαπᾷς and φιλεῖς :—

Jesus. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these [others]?"

Peter. "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that thou art dear to me."

Jesus. "Feed my lambs."—"Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?"

Peter. "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that thou art dear to me."

Jesus. "Feed my sheep."—"Simon, son of Jonas am I dear to thee?"

Peter. "Lord, thou knowest all things: thou knowest that thou art dear to me."

Jesus. "Feed my dear flock."

NOTE D, p. 40.

Galilean Fishes.

Although the press continues to pour forth works on Palestine with a profusion only surpassed by the books on prophecy, it is curious how many points still need elucidation. One of these is the ichthyology of the Sea of Tiberias, and of the Jordan with its tributaries, a subject which from the singular conditions of that system of lakes and streams should be very interesting to the naturalist, and which ought not to be without its interest to the reader of the Bible. But we really know more about the productions of the newly-discovered lakes in Africa than about the inhabitants of waters in themselves and their history so wonderful, and which multitudes of British and American tourists are visiting every year. In the private residences of England there must be gallons of water from the Jordan; but even in the British Museum there are not, as far as we know, any specimens of fish from the Lake of Galilee.* From analogy, and on the autho-

* The only one we know of is one which we have not seen—a specimen lately added to the Biblical Museum of our friend William Dickson, Esq., Edinburgh.

rity of writers as old as Bellonius and Cotovicus (quoted by Lampe, tom. iii., p. 737), we have no doubt that carp are to be found, and from the description in Hasselquist we are sure of the *Sparus Galilæus*. Our friend Mr. Carruthers writes:—"It belongs to the modern genus *Chromis*. There is no specimen of the *C. Galilæus* in the Museum; indeed, it is unknown, except from Hasselquist's very imperfect description. Dr. Günther says, judging from the Nile species of the same genus, it is likely to grow to the size of a foot and a half. Though very different from, it comes nearest to, our perch; and, like it, it is gregarious." The United States' Expedition mentions five kinds of fish, "all good; viz., the 'Musht,' 'Abu Bût,' 'Huffâfah,' 'Abu Kisher,' and 'Burbût.' The musht, about one foot long, and four or five inches wide, resembles the sole."

NOTE E, p. 52.

"Thou didst them unto me."

"In John Falk's Refuge at Weimar, when one of the boys had said the pious grace, 'Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest, and bless what thou hast provided,' a little fellow looked up and said, 'Do tell me why the Lord Jesus never comes?' 'Dear child, only believe, and you may be sure He will come, for He does not despise our invitation.' 'I shall set him a seat,' said the little fellow; and just then there was a knock at the door. A poor frozen apprentice entered, begging a night's lodging. He was made welcome; the chair stood empty for him;

every child wanted him to have his plate; and one was lamenting that his bed was too small for the stranger, who was quite touched by such uncommon attentions. The little one had been thinking hard all the time. 'Jesus could not come, and so He sent this poor man in His place; is that it?' 'Yes, dear child, that is just it. Every piece of bread, and every drink of water that we give to the poor or the sick, or the prisoners, for Jesus' sake, we give to Him. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."'"—*Stevenson's Praying and Working*, p. 48.

NOTE F, p. 125.

Aspirations.

Of a life similarly lofty and ardent we have the aspirations embodied in the following prayer of Norris of Bemerton, who mused and sang on the same plains of Salisbury where George Herbert passed his years of cheerful piety: "My God! my happiness! who art as well the End as the Author of my being—who hast more perfection than I have desire, and art also seriously willing to quench my great thirst in the ocean of thy perfection—I beseech thee show me thy glory. Withdraw thy hand from the cleft of the rock, and remove the bounds from the mount of thy presence, that I may see thee as thou art, and ever dwell in the light of thy beauty. I have long dwelt with vanity and emptiness, and have made myself weary in the pursuit of rest. Oh, let me not fail at

last, after my many wanderings and disappointments, to be taken up into this true and only ark of repose and security, where I may for ever rest, and for ever bless the Author of my happiness. In the meantime, strike, I beseech thee, my soul with such lively apprehension of thy excellencies, such bright irradiations of thy Divine light, that I may see enough to love thee infinitely, to depend on thee for my happiness entirely, and to bear up my spirit under the greatest aridities and dejections with the delightful prospect of thy glories. Oh, let me sit down under this thy shadow with great delight, till the fruit of the tree of life shall be sweet to my taste. Let me stay and entertain my longing soul with the contemplation of thy beauty, till thou shalt bring me into thy banqueting-house, where vision shall be the support of my spirit, and thy banner over me shall be love. Grant this, oh my God, my happiness, for the sake of thy great love, and of the Son of thy love, Christ Jesus. Amen."—*Norris's Miscellanies*, 1710, p. 226. In the same spirit, but with a more impatient eagerness, writes Samuel Rutherford: "Oh, that time would post faster, and hasten our communion with that Fairest among the sons of men! But, a few years will do our turn, and the soldier's hour-glass will soon run out. I am sure the saints, at their best, are but strangers to the weight and worth of the incomparable excellency of Immanuel. We know not the half of what we love when we love Christ."

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(Authors quoted are marked by Italics.)

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